

MONTANA MAGAZINE

OF HISTORY

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ROCKY BOY INDIANS
COWBOY ARTIST,
WOLFER'S REVENGE
SECOND BONANZA
MONTANA MEDLEY
FRONTIER BOOKS



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MONTANA MAGAZINE

OF HISTORY

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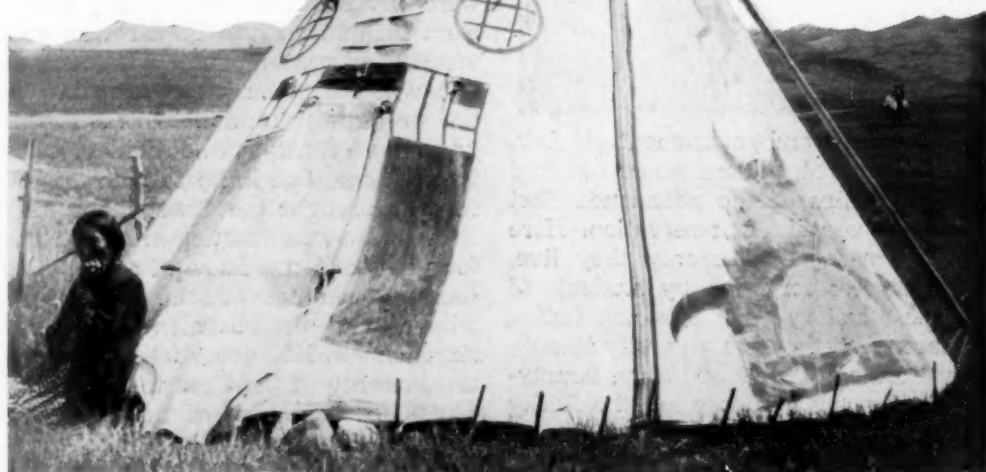
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Montana's Displaced Persons

The

ROCKY BOY INDIANS

By Verne Dusenberry



This is the widow and second wife of Baptiste J. Samatte, whose first wife was Front Sky Woman, daughter of Rocky Boy; seated before her lodge on the Reservation in June, 1953.

Indians and whites clashed on every frontier in Montana during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the Battle of the Little Big Horn or the Battle of the Bear's Paw epitomizes the end of the resistance of the Indian in our popular thinking.

But the Indian "trouble" did not end with the dramatic battles that have become part of our regional heritage. That such trouble lingered on for the next forty years or more, being especially significant from 1885 until 1917, is reflected in the press of that period; for as one reads the newspapers of that day he is aware of an impatience and a vituperation seldom found even in the

chronicles of the West. And that hatred, totally disregarding all sense of human values, was directed against two small bands of Indians. Perhaps it was their nuisance value that infuriated earlier Montanans; because with the Blackfeet, Crow, Gros Ventre, Assiniboine and even the Sioux and Cheyenne safely on reservations, people did not want to see Indians at their doorsteps—especially Indians who were nomads without a treaty or without a home. Finally, however, to the everlasting credit of a few leading Montana citizens and a few far-sighted

Verne Dusenberry is President of the Montana Institute of the Arts. Now returned to his old position of professor of English at Montana State College, Mr. Dusenberry completed this sympathetic study while teaching at Northern Montana College, Havre.



Little Bear in a picture believed taken at Regina in 1896. This was at the time of his trial for instigation of the Frog Lake murders during the Riel Rebellion.

Army officers and government officials, these bands of Indians were assigned two townships of the abandoned Fort Assiniboine military reservation. Here in present-day Hill county they live, more or less forgotten by students of Montana history or of Montana Indian culture. And they are generally known, even to the citizenry of Havre, twenty-five miles away, simply as "the Rocky Boy Indians."

But Rocky Boy is not a tribal name; it is the name of a Wisconsin-born chief who came with his small band of Chippewas to Montana after having lived many years in Canada. And the story of the Indians on the present reserve is a sequel to the Riel Rebellion, for it includes the lot of Little Bear and his band of Canadian Cree who sought and were granted political exile in the United States. Thus to understand the present Chippewa-Cree now on the Rocky Boy Reservation, one must follow the vicissitudes of these two alien bands and their final union and sanctuary on part of the old military reservation.

The story of Big Bear's participation in support of Riel in 1885 is a matter of well-recorded history.¹ Big Bear and his band of Plain's Cree supported Riel by attacking various outposts of English

forts and settlements; best remembered, perhaps, is the Frog Lake massacre where every white man but one was killed. Big Bear, who had done all he could to prevent the attack, ultimately was captured, but because of his previously good record, he received a three-year prison sentence. His second son, Little Bear (or Imasees, as he was known in Canada where he is still considered as the instigator of the Frog Lake murders), escaped to the United States. With him were several members of Big Bear's band including Little Poplar who previously had spent much time in Montana and who had returned to Canada just the preceding autumn.² Little Poplar knew the country on both sides of the International line intimately and it was he who brought the Cree to the Milk River, a favorite hunting area of theirs for years and the cause of a perpetual feud between them and the Gros Ventre, who after the establishment of Fort Assiniboine in 1879 never failed to report the presence of the Cree to the United States forces. Many of the Cree, and with them were a number of half breeds, hunted along the Milk River and built cabins there. Even though the Army burned their cabins and drove them from the area, the Cree liked the buffalo hunting in the Milk River country so it was only natural that Little Bear and Little Poplar came back as they were eluding the hangman's noose in Canada.

The attack on Frog Lake occurred on Maundy Thursday, April 2, 1885. Two months later, Big Bear and his group surrendered to the forces of the Crown, and Little Bear, Little Poplar and their followers made their way into the United States. By December 30 of that year their presence was noticed by the Fort Benton *River Press* which reported that Lt. Robertson of the First Cavalry had turned over to the Commanding Officer at Fort Assiniboine 137 Cree Indians, "67 bucks, 50 squaws, 25 children."

Included in the group were Big Bear, Jr., (Little Bear) and Little Poplar. "Little Poplar, the chief, proved refractory and was deposed, disarmed, and tied to the wagon," reads the account.³ The correspondent also mentioned that the capture raises an "interesting point of international law," for once delivered to Fort Assiniboine the Indians were released on orders received from Washington by wire.

For the next two years, Little Bear and his band spent most of their time in the vicinity of Fort Assiniboine. The men cut wood for the fort and in general were supported by the military forces. That they were well-liked appears in a statement from the Commanding Officer, Col. E. S. Otis of the 10th Infantry, who in February, 1888, wrote, "These Indians are workers, are eager to have land assigned them for cultivation and have some knowledge of soil tillage."⁴ During the severe winter of 1886 and 1887, however, most of the band camped on the south fork of the Sun River where in temperatures ranging from 35 to 40 degrees below zero and with 15 inches of snow on the ground, the *River Press* for January 19, 1887, reported that "they are in destitute condition."

Evidence is available, however, that during these first years in Montana, this band of Cree made attempts to find a place to settle and to live. In August, 1887, a Metis named Pierre Busha appeared before a council of chiefs and representatives of the Flathead, Pend d' Oreille and Kutenai tribes and asked for homes for sixty families on the Flathead reservation. "The Indians listened attentively to the pathetic story of Riel's lieutenant who depicted the suffering, privations, and hardships of these exiles of a lost cause in their escape upon American soil where they sought refuge after the execution of their leader."⁵ Michelle, chief of the Pend d' Orielle, spoke for the confederated tribes, ex-



pressed his sympathy, but could not offer the Cree a home since the government planned to move Chief Charlot's band of Salish to the reservation and such move would utilize all the land. Busha stayed on the Flathead reservation until that fall, however, for in late October he visited Peter Ronan, agent for the Flathead, and begged him to wire the Indian department. Ronan complied with Busha's wishes and on October 28 sent the following wire to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs:⁶

"Pierre Busha of Cree refugees is now at this agency; will leave for Cree encampment in three days from date. He is desirous to learn if encouragement be given to Crees by government to either settle upon public lands or give them homes on some reservation; the Blackfeet reserve would suit them if they cannot remove to this reservation. He awaits an answer if he can encourage his people to this effect."

¹ Joseph Kinsey Howard, *Strange Empire*, (Wm. Morrow Co., N. Y., 1952).

² Wm. Bleasdel Cameron, *Blood Red the Sun*, (Kenway Publishing Co., Calgary, 1950).

³ Little Poplar was killed near Fort Assiniboine by a half-breed scout named Ward a year or two later in a dispute over a horse theft. Legend has it that his head was severed from his body and sent to Canada in the hope of securing a reward.

⁴ Senate Reports, Vol. 4, No. 821. 54th Congress, 1st Session.

⁵ The Fort Benton *River Press*, August 24, 1887.

⁶ The Great Falls *Tribune*, November 9, 1887.

On October 31, the Commissioner wired his reply: "Tell Busha that the Indian Department can make no promises in regards to land for British Cree refugees." Busha took the trail to Dupuyer Creek where the Crees were encamped.

Trouble loomed on the Northern frontier after the hard winter of 1886-87. Cattlemen sought new grazing lands for their herds so they moved across the Missouri to the choice grass growing on Indian reservations and a new treaty, shrinking the boundaries of their reserve, was made with the Gros Ventre. Trouble enough arose with the Gros Ventre, Assiniboiné, and Blackfeet, yet they had their reserves and could be forced to stay on them. The displaced Cree antagonized everyone. Typical was the experience related by John W. Collins (later game warden of Silver Bow county) who in 1887 was manager of the Home Land and Cattle Company, an outfit that grazed 7,000 cattle between the Missouri and the Milk. During the winter of 1887 and 1888, nearly 40 lodges with about 200 Indians camped near the home ranch were on the verge of starvation. "The cowboys poisoned several hundred coyotes and threw the carcasses into the ravines where the Indians found them and devoured them and seemed to grow fat on the poisoned meat."⁷ Later, Collins reported that he had given the Indians forty head of "snowbound" cattle, but at his first absence from the ranch, they came to the place, frightened Mrs. Collins, and carried off everything they wanted.

Incidents like these multiplied and grievances poured into the office of the Territorial Governor and to Washington. On April 18, 1888, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs wrote to William F. Vilas, Secretary of the Interior: "I am aware that these refugees are not native Indians of the United States nor that they have rights on any of our Indian reservations, but as a simple act of humanity, I think they should be given a chance to earn their bread when that is

all they ask. They have been wandering about from place to place . . . homeless and helpless . . ."⁸

After Montana's admission into the Union, Governor Joseph K. Toole received letters from several people in Montana complaining about the Cree and stating that "British Cree were flocking into the state." All of the letters plus a request of his own, went to Washington. Finally, on September 24, 1892, L. A. Grant, Acting Secretary of War, forwarded a report from the Commanding General of the Department of Dakota to the Governor:⁹ "Enquiry from all Posts in this department on the Northern Frontier fails to establish that there have been any recent incursion of Cree Indians from Canada. Since 1885 there have been in our territory about 200 Cree Indians who were political refugees who took part in the Riel Rebellion. These have been permitted to remain and have been up to 1887 fed and clothed through the intervention of the Army. At the present time these Cree men and women in Montana and North Dakota are employed by citizens in wood chopping and laundry and other work, which shows that they are very useful, are well conducted and would be greatly missed in the industries of the country were they now removed. This information comes from citizens."

Governor Toole left office and his successor, Governor John Rickards, seems to have intensified his effort to rid the state of "These Dirty Crees" as the *Anaconda Standard* for January 10, 1896, headlined them. "Silver Bow County would gladly part with the renegades . . . The renewed efforts by Governor Rickard to solve the Cree difficulty has great hopes in Silver Bow County . . . The county is practically supporting between fifty and one hundred of these Canadian beggars . . ." A few days later, Governor Rickards wrote to Richard Olney, Secretary of State: "Sire, this office has had previous correspondence with the Department of State in relation to the presence of a number of Cree Indians in our



Above Headquarters building of million dollar Fort. Assiniboine, built in 1879 to guard the northern ramparts of Montana Indian territory. The 10th of 13 territorial military posts, it largely supplanted Forts Benton, Shaw and Logan and was vital in the Rocky Boy story.

These orders of June 5, 1885 from Fort Assiniboine are typical of the restive military position during the Frog Lake massacre and the Riel Rebellion. Later, then-Lt. John J. Pershing operated under such orders.

Fort Assiniboine, N. D.
June 5th 1885

Orders
No. 100

I. Captain A. H. Harbach, 20th Infantry, with 2nd Lieut. J. C. Robertson, 1st Cavalry, Sergeant Tall and six (6) privates of Troop I 1st Cavalry, one non-commissioned officer and six (6) men Troop C 1st Cavalry, to be selected by Troop Commander, and one (1) will leave the fort to remove the 6th inch and establish a camp, on Milk River between that point and Cypress Point at some place from which the country between those points can be carefully watched, for parties of Sioux, Cree or Gros Ventre Indians crossing the river.

Bells will be fed with Carbine ammunition and twelve (12) cartridges per man for pistol.

Sabres will not be taken.

The command will be supplied with ten (10) days rations.

Half forage for ten (10) days will also be carried.

The Quartermaster Department will furnish the necessary transportation, consisting of one (1) six mile team, three (3) pack mules and a mule for the guide.

Captain Harbach will take charge of, and conduct to the boundary line, under instructions from District Headquarters the fifty (50) Cree Indians captured by Lieut. Robertson on 25th ult.

By order of
Chas. Henry Canell,
Adj. Gen.
1st Lieut. J. C. Robertson, 1st Cavalry
1st Adjutant.

A. C. S.



In 1895 Congress decreed that the "refugee" Cree Indians should be "removed from the State of Montana" and delivered to the Canadian Line. Because of the bitterness engendered by some newspapers, people reacted with sadistic haste. Here, handled like cattle are a group of the Indians being rounded up on First Street at Havre in 1896.

state. These Indians are wards of the British government and generally referred to as refugees of the Riel Rebellion. In default of a reservation and the restrictions of the Federal government, they become an intolerable nuisance constantly violating our game laws, foraging our herds, and not infrequently looting isolated cabins. The patience of our people has been sorely tried . . ."¹⁰

Finally, action came from Congress in 1895 when \$5,000 was appropriated "to remove from the State of Montana and to deliver at the International boundary line the refugee Canadian Cree Indians . . ."¹¹ Major J. M. J. Sanno of the Third Infantry arrived from St. Paul early in June under orders to inquire into the Cree situation. The government, however, seemed to be undecided whether deportation should include Cree who had certificates that they were not wards of the Canadian government, but Governor Rickards insisted that all Cree must be sent to Canada as "they are caught."¹² Within a week, First Lieutenant J. J. Pershing of the 10th Cavalry¹³ surprised an encampment of Cree near Great Falls and arrested them. Telling them that the "Great Mother of Canada" had granted full pardon to them for all acts done in the Riel Rebellion and that no punish-

ment awaited them, Pershing then stationed soldiers at intervals around the camp and told the Indians that they were under arrest. John Hoffman, an attorney in Great Falls, promptly appeared in court for the Cree and said that the act of Congress did not authorize the deportation but merely made an appropriation for their deportation; that the law reads "Canadian Cree," and that at least sixty American citizens born in Montana were being deported contrary to the Constitution of the United States.¹⁴ Judge Benton ruled, however, that the state courts had no authority to act and that the deportation should proceed.

Detachments of soldiers began a systematic state-wide round-up. The *Helena Independent* for June 26, 1896, gleefully announced that a trainload of "Cree and their horses and dogs" had passed through Helena enroute to Coultts. The same article stated that the problem was growing more complicated because many of those caught claimed to be Gros Ventre, Assiniboine, or Chippewa. From Fort Assiniboine an officer wrote Governor Rickards to the effect that ". . . about seventy Indians have been turned loose upon the grounds that they were not Cree. Some did belong upon the Belknap reservation but were caught in

the dragnet while the troops were sweeping the country. Others were real Chippewas who never have been confined to any reservation but have been camp followers and hangers on about the Assiniboine and Gros Ventre camps since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary."¹⁵

When the train carrying Little Bear crossed the border, he and one of his tribesman, Lucky Man, were arrested for complicity in the Frog Lake murders. The two were taken from the train and sent to jail in Regina. The *Great Falls Tribune* for July 4, 1896, called this act "an outrageous breach of faith . . . As it now stands, Indians have a right to say that the word of a United States Army officer was used to induce them to walk into a trap which had been treacherously laid for them." A. M. Hamilton, later secretary of the Saskatchewan Historical Society, described best what happened to them in a letter to Mrs. Anne McDonnell:¹⁶

"The majority of them [the Cree] were taken and distributed on various Canadian reserves and caused no more trouble. Aimiceese [a variant of Imansees, Little Bear's Canadian name] and Lucky Man, however, were well known to have been prime movers in the Frog Lake affair, and who by proclamation had been excluded from the terms of the amnesty, were at once arrested and charged with the murder

¹⁵ The *Anaconda Standard*, January 19, 1896.

¹⁶ Senate Reports, Vol. 4, No. 821. 54th Congress, 1st Session.

¹⁷ *Official Correspondence Relating to Admission of Montana as a State Into the Union Including Proclamations and Official Addresses of Joseph K. Toole*, (Helena, 1892. Compiled by R. P. Stout, Private Secretary to the Governor).

¹⁸ Senate Reports, Vol. 4, No. 821. 54th Congress, 1st Session.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ The *Great Falls Tribune*, June 11, 1896.

²¹ Later General of the Army, John J. Pershing, A. E. F. Commander during World War I and a military hero. The *Great Falls Tribune*, June 19, 1896.

²² The *Great Falls Tribune*, June 26, 1896.

²³ The *Helena Independent*, June 26, 1896.

²⁴ Letter dated January 12, 1942, now in files of the Historical Society of Montana.

Not only the townspeople, but ranchers from considerable distance trooped into Havre in 1896 to enjoy the sport of landless-Indian deportation. This band of Chippewa-Cree is believed to have been apprehended by Lt. John J. Pershing and his soldiers from Ft. Assiniboine.



of Thomas Quinn and others. Preparations were made to bring them to trial, but eleven years had passed since the Rebellion and it was difficult to obtain witnesses. All the white people had been killed, except for two women and the boy Cameron, and they were in such a state of fear and excitement that the two women at least had no definite recollection of the circumstances. Cameron had been in his store at the time and apparently did not see the actual killing.

"It was, therefore, very difficult to get witnesses who could convict these two men. It was decided to send to Fort MacLeod for the Cree woman who was Quinn's widow . . . If she identified Aimiceese (Little Bear) and Lucky Man, they would be committed for trial, otherwise proceedings would be abandoned.

"I was present in the office of Indian Commissioner at Regina when Mrs. Quinn was brought there to identify or repudiate the killers of her husband. It was a dramatic scene and one that I will never forget. Mr. A. E. Forget, the Indian Commissioner, sat behind his big desk, looking as always, very dignified. Beside him sat Major Perry of the Northwest Mounted Police . . . The two prisoners were brought in manacled. Aimiceese sat in a chair facing the Commissioner and the police officer, while Lucky Man sat on the floor shrouded in his blanket. Aimiceese was a striking looking man, and I should judge about forty years old or more. He was much stouter than the Crees usually are and powerfully built. He had a predatory Falcon face and he looked around the room with a bold and insolent air. His handcuffs he concealed in the folds of his belted blanket. Lucky Man was a dreadful looking rascal, thin and emaciated, with his face seamed by a thousand wrinkles . . . Two Red Coats, with side arms and open holsters, stood beside the prison-

ers as guards. Johnny Pritchard, a young half-breed, the son and brother of the two men who had saved the lives of Mrs. Delaney and Mrs. Gowenlock, stood between the prisoners and the Commissioner, in the traditional attitude of an Indian interpreter, with his hat held in both hands across his breast.

"When all were in place, Forget said, 'Pritchard, bring in the woman.' Johnny went out and returned with Mrs. Quinn. She was a large and bulky Cree woman of the pure blood and had no English. Mr. Forget said, 'Tell her, Pritchard, to look at these two men and say if she has ever seen them before.' Pritchard rendered this into Cree and Mrs. Quinn, despite her great bulk, walking in moccasined feet as lightly as a cat, walked up to the two prisoners and gave them careful scrutiny. It was a tense moment. There is no doubt that both men knew that what the woman said meant their freedom or shameful death, but neither gave the slightest sign. Aimiceese continued to boldly stare about the room . . . Lucky Man paid no attention.

"There was a silence for a moment, broken only by the metallic clink of the handcuffs on Lucky Man's wrists. Then the woman came to a pause and spoke in Cree to the interpreter. 'What does she say, Pritchard?' said Forget. 'She says, Sir,' said Johnny, 'she has never seen either of these two men before.' 'By Gad!' said Mr. Forget, 'I might have known. These are her own people and it was only her husband that they murdered.'

"Subsequently they were both released. I think Lucky Man died not long afterwards, but Aimiceese, who afterwards was assigned to the Hobema Agency in Alberta, arose to the position of a minor chief and gave no more trouble to the authorities . . ."

But five years later the Cree were back in Montana and the press in the state was crying for their expulsion

An early picture of a government ration issue to "ward" or reservation Indians. It was not until 1916 that the Chippewa-Cree were included.



The *Anaconda Standard* recommended "The Cavalry should cooperate with the agents in driving the Crees off every reservation."¹⁷ The *Montana Daily Record* of Helena reminded its readers that these Cree were the Indians that had been removed by the War Department in 1896 but "... had hurried back to Montana as soon as the soldiers were gone." Also, the *Daily Record* correspondent voiced the fear that the Cree would carry smallpox throughout the state "... it will be impossible to prevent an epidemic of small pox along our northern border unless these people ... who are continually wandering around like gypsies are removed."¹⁸ The *Great Falls Daily Tribune* more soberly told its readers that "The Indian Affairs has no authority to move these Indians unless there is specific demand from Montana."

During the early years of the twentieth century, reports again appeared in the newspapers and more complaints were lodged against the "wandering Crees." Various plans were suggested; Father LaCombe, first missionary into the Canadian Northwest, came out with the idea that the Cree should be sent to a colony one hundred miles east of Edmonton. His idea had the support of J. J. Hill, whose Great Northern railroad had been recently completed through Northern Montana and who, perhaps, had begun his "dream of empire." Commenting upon the general situation, the *Helena Daily Independent* stated: "Some years ago the Crees were rounded up in Montana and taken across into Canada where they belong, but they soon drifted back and some months ago they were so much of

a nuisance that an appeal was made to the state authorities for relief from their presence."¹⁹ When in 1908 the Forest Service gave Little Bear and his band a job collecting cones from the lodge pole pine, for seeds to be used by nurseries, the same newspaper grudgingly reported that "about 50 Indians have been gathering cones and now have 500 bushels of pine tree fruit which has netted the squaws and paposes 40 cents a bushel and is a bonanza to the natives ... The stores of the pine tree squirrels aided the Indians, who robbed them with impunity and it is likely that many a squirrel family will go hungry this winter."²⁰

Little Bear's personality emerges during the next few years; still undaunted by every rebuff possible for almost thirty years, he became the definite leader of the homeless Indians of Montana. When he heard that Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, planned to visit Helena, "... he stalked into the lobby of the Placer Hotel at Helena and had a conference with the representative of the White Father. 'God was taking care of us all right until the white man came and took the responsibility off His hands. Last winter our wives and our children lived on dogs and the carcasses of frozen horses to keep from starving.' 'God ordained,' said the Secretary, 'that man must work to live and nobody gets the land who does not use it. The white man took the Indian land to raise wheat and corn and oats and cattle. The land produces nothing. It is the man who

¹⁷ The *Anaconda Standard*, August 1, 1901.

¹⁸ The *Montana Daily Record*, August 1, 1901.

¹⁹ The *Helena Daily Independent*, January 28, 1904.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

produces things.' 'That's what we're after,' responded the sombre old chief."²¹

As the years passed and Little Bear saw the futility of securing land for his people, he began to relinquish some of his leadership. He knew that he was under the stigma of being a participant and leader of the Frog Lake murders; he realized that alone he could not secure for his people rights on American soil. Hence, as a matter of expedience he joined forces with another displaced band of Indians who had been wandering over Montana seeking a home, that of Rocky Boy and his band of Chippewas.²²

Whether it is Rocky Boy's Chippewa who were the "camp followers and hangers on about the Assiniboine and Gros Ventre camps since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary,"²³ is a matter only of speculation. We know that in 1904 a bill was introduced into the United States Senate to provide a home for Rocky Boy and his group of 110 wandering American-born Indians on the Flathead reservation.²⁴ The bill was killed, however, and it was not until 1909 that any action was again started to secure a place for them.

When the attention of Helena residents was called to the starving condition of the Indians, they immediately acted by sending clothes, food and blankets. The response was reported in the *Helena Daily Independent*, January 10, 1909, as follows: "With tears streaming down his cheeks while resting in the snow on his knees, and with his hands lifted in supplication, Chief Rocky Boy . . . offered thanks to the people of Helena . . . saying God would bless them." In Great Falls, William Bole, editor of the *Great Falls Tribune* who had known Rocky Boy for many years, began a crusade in his paper for support. "His (Rocky Boy's) annually starved women and children get kicked around from pillar to post, enmeshed with department red tape, and nothing is done about it."²⁵ Charley Russell, who started a subscription list in Great Falls, is quoted as say-

ing, "It doesn't look very good for the people of Montana if they will sit and see a lot of women and children starve to death in this kind of weather. Lots of people seem to think that the Indians are not human beings at all and have no feelings. These kind of people would be the first to yell for help if their grub pile was running short and they didn't have enough clothes to keep out the cold, and yet because it is Rocky Boy and his bunch of Indians they are perfectly willing to let them die of hunger and cold without lifting a hand."²⁶

Judge Hunt of Helena was among the sympathetic officials who became interested in the Chippewas. As a result of his wires to Washington, a special investigation was ordered which resulted in the Secretary of the Interior directing the General Land Office to set aside certain lands for their use.²⁷ The Commissioner of Indian Affairs directed T. W. Wheat, a clerk in the allotting service, to proceed to Helena to investigate the condition of the band.

In a letter to the Commissioner written from Browning and dated April 20, 1909, Mr. Wheat reports:²⁸ "I have found Chief Rocky Boy and a portion of his band camped near the slaughter houses about one mile east of Helena. From Rocky Boy I learned that his band of Indians was scattered over the western part of Montana . . . It may be stated

²¹ The *Cut Bank Pioneer Press*, August 8, 1913.

²² Many authorities maintain that Rocky Boy's wife was a sister of Big Bear, Little Bear's father. No less a personage than the late Senator William T. Cowan, who knew Little Bear and Rocky Boy intimately well, makes this relationship appear in his unpublished manuscript concerning the establishment of the Rocky Boy reserve. Four Souls, son of Little Bear, says that the two women, the wives of Big Bear and Rocky Boy, were distant cousins, and that his father brought the Cree into the Chippewa group under Rocky Boy because he thought there would be greater chance for them to secure land.

²³ Cf. Footnote 7.

²⁴ Senate Reports, Vol. 4. No. 1020. 58th Congress, 2nd Session.

²⁵ The *Great Falls Tribune*, January 8, 1909.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Copy of letter on file in the office of the sub-agent, Rocky Boy Agency.

here that there are a great many Canadian Crees roaming over the entire state of Montana, but very few are affiliated with Rocky Boy's band of Chippewas . . . I found that the Indians belonging to this band are very poor. Nearly all of them are camped in the neighborhood of slaughter houses near the towns and cities, and their food is limited to bread and refuse that they receive from these slaughter houses. They obtain their flour, clothing, bedding, camp equipage, etc., by selling bead work and polished cow horns made into hatracks. A few of the men work on ranches and at cutting wood. They seem to be willing to work after they receive employment, but they are backward about looking for work. These Indians know no home except ragged filthy tents. From Helena, it is about 400 miles, as the crow flies, to the lands on which it is proposed to locate these Indians . . . It is impossible for the Indians to make this journey by their own efforts. Their horses are not equal to the task of making the trip, and the Indians have absolutely no means of subsistence on the way. In view of the long journey, the condition of the Indians' horses and the utter lack of any means of subsistence, I would respectfully suggest that the Indians, their horses, wagons, and camp equipage be loaded on a freight train and taken to the lands on which they are to be located."

The land set aside for the use of the Chippewas was in the extreme northeastern corner of Montana. Reports vary as to why they were not sent—some say that the Indians did not want to go because the area was treeless; others hint that J. J. Hill used his influence to open the land to settlers. "The *Tribune* made a blunder in trying to fasten public prejudice in the affair by associating it almost exclusively with President Hill of the Great Northern Railway Company and intimating that it was a purely selfish motive that caused him to take the interest he did in the matter that resulted so happily for eastern Valley

county," editorialized the *Havre Plaindealer*, November 6, 1909. Mr. Bole, writing in the *Tribune* on the same date, reminded his readers of the check that had been sent to Helena the winter before, and that ". . . it was returned with the information that the government was at last awake to its responsibility and . . . that Rocky Boy and his band would be fed and cared for and located on land in the spring. Then the government went to sleep again and more red tape was wound around Rocky Boy and his band. Winter was approaching and the lean hunger wolf grinned at the lodge doors. An urgent appeal was sent to Washington for relief of these Indians. The *Tribune* was creditably informed that about \$65 was spent in telegraphing back and forth to all sorts of absent officials and after 17 days of this sort of monkey business, the princely sum of \$100 was forwarded to relieve the necessities of about 125 people during the winter. Then Rocky Boy's band scattered again. They deemed it safer to trust to the tender mercies of a Montana winter than to the Great White Father which had so often proved a broken reed to pierce their hand."

The *Havre Plaindealer* for January 22, 1910, proudly announced: "By order of Richard A. Ballinger, Secretary of Interior, about 1,400,000 acres of land in Valley County, Montana, known as the 'Rocky Boy Indians Lands,' will be thrown open to white settlers March 1, 1910, and will be subject to both settlement and entry March 31 and thereafter." Whether by choice or design, the Chippewas were not sent to the lands which had finally been set aside for their use.

Public pressure continued during the summer of 1910. That fall the Indians were shipped in box cars to the Blackfeet reservation at Browning.²⁹ According to Mr. Yellow Bird,³⁰ a Chippewa who was with the group and who now lives on the Rocky Boy reserve, most of the people who went to the Blackfeet

reservation were Chippewas although there were a few Cree. He stated that the Blackfeet had been allotted 320 acres apiece, while the Chippewas and Crees who were sent there, each received 80 acres. Several of the members, Yellow Bird remembered, stayed on their allotments for three years and that during the time Little Bear was the outspoken critic of their location, for he was dissatisfied with the small acreage given to the new-comers in contrast to the amount allotted to the Blackfeet. Also, the Chippewa and Cree were made to feel inferior and unwanted by their Blackfeet neighbors. This further incensed Little Bear, who realized, though, that the feeling against him was too strong for him to secure a place for his people; so while he was the most powerful speaker for the group, he enlisted Rocky Boy's aid and started Rocky Boy agitating again for another refuge. Talk was beginning to be heard about the plans the army had for abandoning Fort Assinniboine, and Little Bear—through the kindly and better liked Rocky Boy—saw a chance to secure a portion for the merged bands.

The closing of Fort Assinniboine and the notice that the lands would be open for homesteading in another year brought a gleeful notice in the *Havre Plaindealer*, December 9, 1911. 200,000 acres would soon be opened adjacent to Havre. Havre residents were vocal in their attempts to keep any of the former military reservation out of the hands of the Indians, for one suggestion had been made that the buildings at the Fort, valued at \$2,000,000, be given to Rocky Boy and his band. While the newspapers carried on the fight against such action, Congress gave the buildings and one section of land to the State of Montana.³¹ In the meantime the newspaper row continued.

An editorial in the January 11, 1913, issue of the *Havre Plaindealer* was directed against "Rocky Boy and his band of trifling, lazy, renegade Chippewa Indians . . . Located near Havre, they would

inevitably become a charge upon the bounty and charity of local people. There is no earthly reason why these people should be sluffed off by the government on Havre." Finally, a state senator from Havre presented a resolution to the Senate asking Congress not to place the Indians on the Fort Assinniboine reservation.³² William Bole, always alert to their problems, came to the defense of the Chippewa and attacked the memorial in his editorial in the *Tribune* January 19, 1913. After reviewing the sufferings of the Indians, he wrote: "The government owes them a debt. It is a debt of honor. The fact that the Havre folk or the Great Falls folk, or any other people in the State do not like to have them around makes no difference . . . While we agree with the people of Havre that they should not be located near that city or any other city, it is because we are sure that it would be bad for the Indians rather than the people living in these cities. Rocky Boy and his band have the prior claim in Washington.

"These Indians have no powerful friends, they have no money, they have no property. They have nothing to commend themselves to the favor of any white man, but a claim that has justice and equity back of it. We hope they will get a reserve of land assigned to them . . . and with this land we hope they will get houses and stock and tools and food and everything they need to give them a start on the road to independence and self-support. And when they do get this they will get nothing more than long delayed justice . . . The condition of Rocky Boy and his band is dark with dishonor to every member of the white race. That memorial to Congress needs radical amendment in order to express the truth."

Frank D. Linderman, long time friend of other Indians in the state, visited Rocky Boy's camp near Fort Harrison on March, 1913. A few days later he was in Great Falls and the *Great Falls Leader* for March 13, 1913, printed an

interview with him. "Jealous boomers who look forward to the complete settling of the West stand in the way of giving land to the Indians . . . Each hour the task of aiding them becomes greater and the condition worse because the game is going and the farmer is coming . . . Assinniboine is an abandoned military reservation and belongs to the national government . . . Land boomers have their eyes on it and the politicians will listen to them." To which the Havre *Plaindealer* retorted two days later: "Frank Linderman who has gained his knowledge of the noble redman from a too faithful reading of Leatherstocking Tales in which Pathfinder and Deerslayer, Indian heroes, had been exalted for their fidelity to principle and to whom faculties of reasoning almost superhuman were given by the author has become interested in Chief Rocky Boy and his tribe of human scavengers and has determined to find for them a haven upon the Assinniboine military reservation."

In the fall of 1913, Mr. Bole went to Washington, D. C. to enlist the support of the Department of Interior in securing a place for the Indians on the Assinniboine reserve. He found hope that such action could be accomplished and that rations would be provided during the coming winter.³⁴ Promptly, a delegation of three left Havre for Washington bent on protesting against putting Rocky Boy and his Indians on the old military reserve. In an interview with Cato Sells, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Havre trio brought out:³⁵ (1) That most of these Indians were Canadian Cree and our government has no obligation to claims to Assiniboine lands; (2) That the Indians had no claims to Assiniboine lands; (3) That the lands are most valuable and desirable for white settlers; (4) That this is a shiftless vagabond band infected with disease and are a constant menace; (5) That they are notoriously improvident.

Some months after their visit to Washington, the Havre residents received a

letter from Senator Henry L. Myers informing them that Commissioner Sells had agreed to move the Indians back to the Blackfeet Indian reservation. That they were not moved is evidenced in the *Cut Bank Press*, July 3, 1914, which reported: "The Havre papers are very peevish over the efforts being made to set aside the Assinniboine reservation as a home for Rocky Boy. The editors of the Havre papers are holding up their lily-white hands in horror at the prospect of having these nomads at their front doors, occupying the choicest tract of land in the Bear Paw settlement and are scolding everybody concerned because they were not permanently placed upon the Blackfeet reservation, which according to their myopic view seems fit only for the homeless and unfortunate band . . . It is a ridiculous assumption and a brazen affront to the residents of the Blackfeet to assert in one breath that the Assinniboine is too good for the Rocky Crees and that the proper place for them is on the Blackfeet reservation . . ."

Throughout the rest of the year 1914 and during all of 1915, the battle raged over the settlement of Rocky Boy and his people. Finally fearing presidential veto unless some lands were set aside for Rocky Boy,³⁶ Senator Myers introduced a bill in April, 1916, setting aside 30,900 acres of Fort Assinniboine as a permanent reservation for Rocky Boy's band of Chippewas and other homeless Indians in Montana. The bill passed and the Indians were given 56,035 acres of land.³⁷

³⁴ James Kipp of Lodge Pole, grandson of the James Kipp of the American Fur Company, recalls seeing the Chippewas and their horses and dogs and tipis unloaded at Browning. "When spring came, they disappeared into the four winds like the birds," Mr. Kipp said, "and they didn't come back." Personal interview, April 19, 1953.

³⁵ Yellow Bird is listed as Malcolm Mitchell on the Rocky Boy Agency roll. Personal interview, April 14, 1953.

³⁶ The Havre *Plaindealer*, December 21, 1912.

³⁷ The *Cut Bank Pioneer Press*, November 29, 1912.

³⁸ The Havre *Plaindealer*, January 25, 1913.

³⁹ The Great Falls *Tribune*, December 15, 1913.

⁴⁰ The Havre *Plaindealer*, December 27, 1913.

⁴¹ The Havre *Plaindealer*, February 13, 1915; April 1, 1916.

⁴² U. S. Statutes 38, No. 807.

Little Bear lived on the reservation until his death in 1921, but one year after the creation of the reserve, Rocky Boy died. The Great Falls *Tribune*, April 23, 1917, commented upon his death by saying: "Rocky Boy is dead. The chief of the nomadic band of Chippewa Indians passed to the 'Happy Hunting Ground' on Tuesday, April 18, on the reservation near Box Elder . . . In that passing, one of the most picturesque of the Indian characters in the last third of a century of Montana history disappears from the stage and the passing marks the closing of a unique chapter in Montana Indian history . . . His age is not known to any person in the city, but those who hazard a guess on it put him past eighty years old." The same article also published a letter that Theodore Gibson of Great Falls had received. It had been written for Baptiste Samatte, son-in-law of Rocky Boy, by I. C. Reid. "My Dear Sir: Today I am writing this letter to you to tell you a sad news. On the 18th inst. at 9 o'clock a. m. our leader of the Chippewas passed away to eternity. When he received letters from you he was glad and he wished very much to see you all, who have labored so long in his behalf, and gave you his ideas . . .

"But these are his last words on his last breath. Never forget what I have tried to do for the homeless people in Montana toward the government and also, he said, never forget Mr. William Bole, Theodore Gibson and his father, and Frank Linderman who done and taken pains to get us a home from our government. And he told all the people to strive and labor hard so that the government may see that we are ambitious to get a home and land and also he told his people to be kind to one another and help one another.

"He died so peacefully, just like he was going to some place for a time. I wish you would tell Mr. Bole and Frank Linderman about the death of our chief, Rocky Boy. We have lost a valuable man.

We are sorrowing and mourning for him. I am sending my best regard to you and also to the old man. May Almighty bless us until we meet again."

Another year passed before the government completed its roll of eligible Indians on the reservation which was immediately named for the old chief. Of the 658 names submitted to Washington, 206 were eliminated, and on July 16, 1917, the final roll of 452 Indians who were declared to be entitled to membership and to the benefits of the reservation, was announced.³⁸ In later years many of those whose names had been eliminated were adopted into the tribe with the permission of the Office of Indian Affairs. Some of those rejected remained in Montana and they and their progeny constitute part of the landless Indians of the State.

It was difficult for many of the band to adapt themselves to the reservation life. The years of wandering—the only life many of them had ever known—had left its mark. Instead of making allotments, as had been done on treaty reservations, the Indian Service offered an assignment of 160 acres to each householder who would thus have the right to farm the land for two years, but who had no vested right to the property. Some of the Indians felt that since they could not bequeath the property to their children and because their lease on the assigned lands was subject to review every two years, there was no incentive to construct a decent house or to build up the property. Mistakes, of course, occurred on both sides; as late as 1929 at a special investigation conducted before a subcommittee of the Committee on Indian Affairs (whose chairman was Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana) it was disclosed³⁹ that Indians either worked on their land, raised their prescribed gardens, and performed other duties assigned them or else they were jailed.

Such conditions happily no longer exist. More lands were added to the reser-

Four Souls, son of Little Bear, before the main lodge of the 1953 Sun Dance. He is the present leader of the Chippewa-Cree and a friend of the author, who took this photograph.

vation in 1935, bringing the total to 105,472 acres, and the shift from general farming to stock raising, for which the country is ideal, plus an intelligent and understanding administration, has raised the standard of living; yet the average income in 1952 was listed as being \$600 per family.⁴⁰ Today 641 Chippewa-Cree are living on the reservation although 1,286 are enrolled. Marriage has amalgamated these two tribes until the government on its rolls can only list them as "Chippewa Crees" and refer to them formally as "The Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation."

As one sees these Indians on the reservation today, he is struck with the conflicting cultural forces that have taken place. Just a few of the older women cling to the traditional garb of their past, while most of the people wear clothes similar to those worn by their white neighbors. A few other anomalies are noticed—many of the older men have short hair, but several middle-aged men, including some with blue eyes, and not a few adolescent boys wear their hair in long braids. Most of the people are bilingual and several can speak a dialect of French in addition. The Indian service estimates that only 37 adults are unable to speak English.⁴¹

An outstanding member of the group is Four Souls, son of Little Bear and an intelligent leader of his people. Disclaiming the title of "chief" as being archaic in contemporary culture, Four Souls farms his assignment of land and is on call to drive the ambulance from the agency at Rocky Boy to the hospital at Fort Belknap, approximately sixty-five miles away. He appreciates his Indian heritage (he was born on the Crow reservation and was a lad of about ten when the Rocky Boy lands were made available to his people), and reads widely about the historical and anthropological background of the Cree. One of the leaders at the annual Sun Dance, he sings the songs of his father and his grandfather and helps perpetuate the traditions of



the Sun Dance in order that it may remain a meaningful spiritual experience to the present-day Indian. Likewise, his white neighbors find him cooperative and friendly.

But friendliness is an attribute of the Indians on the Rocky Boy reservation—a friendliness seldom experienced by a stranger on his initial encounter with the average Indian. Maybe it is the result of their thirty odd years of being Montana's displaced persons, for during those years of wandering they knew many white people and learned to speak the English language; maybe it is because they are the descendants of the dynamic Little Bear and of the kindly old Rocky Boy; maybe it is because they are Chippewas and Cree, and we have no other Chippewas or Cree in Montana. Whatever the reason, they are there, ready to share without rancor or bitterness their significant history and heritage to any visitor interested in them.⁴²

⁴⁰ Tentative roll of Rocky Boy Indians, May 30, 1917. Photostatic copy on file in the office of the sub-agent, Rocky Boy Agency.


⁴¹ Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States; Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Indian Affairs; United States Senate, 72nd Congress, 1st Session. Part 23, Montana.

⁴² Report with Respect to the House Resolution Authorizing the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs to Conduct an Investigation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. 82nd Congress, 2nd Session. Union Calendar No. 790. House Report No. 2503. Dec. 15, 1952. Page 1195.

⁴³ House Reports. Vol. 8. No. 2503. 82nd Congress, 2nd Session.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Impressions recorded are those gained by the writer who became acquainted with the Indians during a year's residence in Havre, 1952-53.



I Knew Charles M. Russell

The Cowboy Artist

By Carter V. Rubottom

My home town of Great Falls was also the home of the famous Montana cowboy artist, Charles Marion Russell. He had drifted into town¹ about the time that Father set up shop there, and they became intimate friends.² Mr. Russell bought materials for his paintings from Father's store, The Como Company. Uncle George Gilchrist made up all the canvasses until his death in 1907, and succeeding picture-framers continued to do the same. All the paintings Charley Russell shipped were crated there, usually being placed on view in our show windows first. I have seen as many as eleven wonderful C.M.R. oil paintings in our windows at one time, ready for shipment to some exhibit or buyer, often to distant parts of the world.³

In addition to his great creative talent, Mr. Russell was a man of many facets. In 1898, Father planned a trip to the Medicine Springs in Sun River Canyon, about 85 miles west of Great Falls, with the Reverend Moore and his son Stewart. They would travel by wagon part way, but the last ten miles was a packhorse job. (People troubled with rheumatism made the trip in hope of receiving benefit from bathing in the hot spring and drinking the water.) It required much preparation on Father's part to get his outfit together, since he was a "dude" as regards packing. Mr. Russell—so typical of his interest in others⁴—came to



our house several evenings to teach Father how to tie the diamond hitch on a pack. Mother had a clothes drying rig in the attic, on which the pack was fastened, and Mr. Russell used this, with considerable amusement on his part, but with very good grace.

I recall vividly another instance of the artist's generosity. One day I was looking through a drawer in the work bench where a number of unsold Como pictures had accumulated. Among the varied collection of prints of old masters and poor calendar art, I discovered an original water color. It pictured, graphically, an evening in the badlands, the moon coming up through leafless willows. In the center, on a large flat rock was the bleeding body of a mule deer buck, while a grizzly bear and mountain lion are fighting over the remains. Outside this central group five gray wolves are waiting for what may be left to eat. The painting, quite obviously, showed the rare talent of C. M. Russell, whose signature it bore.

I asked Father if I could have the picture. He said he would have to ask about it. As hardly a week passed when Russell was in town that he did not drop in to swap stories with the boys in The Como back room, it wasn't long until the opportunity arose. I happened to be in the store when he came in. Father showed him the picture. I almost held my breath as I watched. Mr. Russell looked the picture over critically, grunted in his Indian fashion and said, "I never finished this thing. Sure give it to the kid." I promptly hurried into the back

room to frame this water color—to me as fine as the greatest work of art. This picture is still my most prized possession.⁵

I recall that the first calendar using a Russell painting was planned by The Como Company. Charley Russell painted a special picture for it. This portrays an Indian, standing on the back of his horse, painting figures on the face of a cliff with red paint. The Ridgeley Printing Company of Great Falls made up the calendars. They also printed some business cards using the same picture. The original painting disappeared shortly afterwards and to my knowledge has never been seen since.

¹ In the Fall of 1891, Russell received a letter from "Pretty Charlie" Green, a Great Falls gambler, who informed him he could make \$75 a month "and grub" for painting and sculpting. A year later he established residence there which continued for 34 years.

² "My friends are mixed—preachers, priests and sinners. I have many friends among cowmen and cowpunchers. I have always been what is called a good mixer—I had friends when I had nothing else . . ." Preface, MORE RAWHIDES, by C. M. Russell, Montana Newspaper Association, 1925.

³ C. M. R. was modest in regard to his own genius. "To have talent is no credit to its owner; for what man can't help, he should get neither credit nor blame—it's not his fault. I am an illustrator. There are lots better ones, but some worse. Any man that can make a living doing what he likes is lucky, and I'm that," he once wrote.

⁴ Will Rogers said of Russell: "In people, he loved Human Nature. In stories, he loved Human Interest . . . he left us an example of how to live in friendship with all mankind. A Real Downright, Honest to God Human Being."

⁵ Since the opening of the C. M. Russell Room of the new State Historical Building at Helena, this water color has been on display—a loan to the Historical Society of Montana by the author.



This fine photographic study of The Cowboy Artist in his log studio was presented to the Montana Historical Society by Edgar Peterson. A large blow-up of this is featured in the new Russell gallery at Great Falls.



An early picture, in the 1880's, of C.M.R. on his favorite pinto, Monte.



This rare photo of Russell in Indian costume was acquired by the Historical Society in 1929.



Central Ave., Great Falls, as it looked during the later years of Russell's life. Both the Mint and Silver Dollar saloons were near here.

Versatile and generous, Mr. Russell sometimes made window displays during the holidays for his Great Falls storekeeper friends. I recall a wonderful window he once dressed for Frank Webster's grocery on the corner of 3rd St. and Central Ave. Charley painted a background for the display which filled the back of the window space. I watched him do the work in the back room of the Como Co.—a winter scene in the mountains. In the show space he built up his action. He created a park surrounded by tiny evergreen trees. A really accurate miniature log cabin stood on the high ground to the left. In front of the cabin were necessary accessories, including a log with an axe stuck in one end. At the foot of the slope in the right background two whitetail deer, in perfect miniature, were emerging from the trees. The cabin door—symbolic of Montana hospitality—was open. The wax figure of a man stood in the door, while another man just outside was throwing a cartridge into his Winchester, as they looked excitedly down the slope at the two deer, a buck and a doe.⁶ The scene indicated that venison would be on the table for Christmas dinner.

I recall another fine window that Russell designed for Ward's cigar store showing winter in the North country. And because his sympathies were always with the Red Man, this was an Indian camp scene. He put snow covered ground in the show space. One one side stood a buckskin tepee about a foot high. A few inches in front of this was the wax figure of a young Indian woman, holding her baby on its cradle board up beside her head. They were looking toward the park, where the father was coming into sight on his snowshoes, a rifle in one hand and a fine buck deer hung around his neck and shoulders. Another Russell-inspired camp was having venison for Christmas!

Because of his early range life in the Judith Basin cattle empire, Charley Russell kept a saddle horse all his life.⁷ He

rode into downtown Great Falls nearly every day. Usually he would ride down the alley back of our store and tie up to a power pole, using the lariat he always carried on his heavy Western stock saddle. When he visited Billy Rance's famed saloon, The Silver Dollar, his horse stood behind that emporium. Rance was a close friend as was Sid Willis, who owned The Mint saloon, across the street. These two men developed fine collections of Russell's works, paintings, models and personal effects. When Billy Rance died, his collection was added to the one in The Mint, and this combined collection for many years was viewed by thousands of admirers.⁸

Along about 1899, some three years after Russell's marriage,⁹ a few intimate friends planned a camping trip to the upper waters of the Dearborn River, about seventy-five miles southwest of Great Falls on the east slope of the

⁶ Many artists rate Russell more superior as a sculptor than as a painter. This will always be a matter of contention. But to him, sculpting was great fun, while painting was a task. Many people have testified that CMR was often seen with a piece of clay or beeswax in his hands, modeling for his own amazement and to keep his long-fingered hands pliant and active.

⁷ "Although I worked for many years on the range, I am not what the people think a cowboy should be. I was neither a good roper nor rider. I was a night wrangler . . . In the spring I wrangled horses—in the fall I herded beef. I worked for the big outfits and always held my job." Preface, MORE RAWHIDES.

⁸ Despite the fact that The Mint collection was a sight-seeing must for most Montana visitors over a quarter-century span, it ultimately left Montana. After public support fund-raising campaigns failed, it was sold to the Knoedler Galleries in New York City in 1951, for \$125,000; and shortly thereafter was grabbed up by Amon Carter, Texas oil millionaire, at a figure reputedly almost double this.

⁹ Nancy Cooper was a Kentucky-born youngster who came to the cow-town of Cascade in 1894. As was the custom of the day, she "boarded and roomed" with the Ben R. Roberts family. Because C.M.R. was an old friend of the Roberts, it was inevitable that he and Nancy should meet there in 1895. They were married in September of the following year. "With \$75 we furnished a one-room shack there in Cascade, where we lived for one year. There was little chance to get orders for pictures in such a small town, so we moved to Great Falls . . . In 1900, Charlie got a small legacy from his mother, which was the nest egg that started the home we live in," Mrs. Russell later recounted. (pp. 23, *Good Medicine*, Doubleday, N. Y., 1930).



Ben Roberts' home at Cascade where C.M.R. met Nancy.

Rockies. Two separate camps were planned, the party being too large to be handled by one. Mr. and Mrs. Russell, Mr. and Mrs. Trigg and daughter Josephine, Judge and Mrs. Hawkins, Almon LeFebvre and a large negro cook made up one group. Our party consisted of Father, Mother, Miss Coy, Sister Anna and myself.¹⁰

The Russell party left ahead of us, going by way of Cascade and Sullivan Valley, to visit at Mrs. Russell's former home.¹¹ Our party went up Sun River to the old crossing on the Fort Benton-Helena supply road, followed this road south over Bird Tail Divide,¹² meeting the other party at the Dearborn Crossing on the second night out.

The first night we camped about a mile below the old Army post of Fort Shaw,¹³ which had been changed to an Indian school. Father jokingly told Sister and me there were a bunch of Indians camped up the river a way and we had better be good and stay close to camp. But we became too frightened, for the stories of Indian killings and scalping had grown to mammoth proportions in these later years—and Father was hard set to dispell his joking threat.

That night Father picketed one horse, but left the other, old Chub, dragging his rope until bedtime, as Chub was not prone to stray. After eating a good fill of grass, Chub went down to the river for a drink. On his way back he passed close to where we sat by the camp fire where Mother was engaged in camp chores. I took a fool notion to catch the horse by grabbing the rope. As I made a pass at it, Chub started to trot. Father warned

me to leave the rope alone, but I did not heed this advice, made another grab, got a good grip, stubbed my toe on a tree root and went headlong, skinning my nose in the dust. I learned a valuable life-long lesson about grabbing a rope fastened to a running horse or cow.

After meeting the other party at the Dearborn Bridge, we all proceeded up the Middle Fork into the mountains. Mr. Russell absolutely would not ride in a

¹⁰ Not all of these people are readily identifiable. Of them, however, the Triggs are of signal importance. Next door neighbors and intimate friends, it was through the untiring efforts of their daughter Josephine—long-time Great Falls librarian—that the second permanent collection of C.M.R. art finally lodged in Montana. The splendid new \$80,000 Russell art gallery at Great Falls, which opened in Sept. 1953, is the result of a bequest to the Trigg-Russell Foundation, Inc.; by Emma Josephine Trigg (1872-1951) in memory of her parents, Albert J. and Margaret Trigg.

¹¹ Ben R. Roberts, being an intimate of both Charles and Nancy Russell, was one of the first Montanans to actively promote Russell's art. He moved from Cascade to Helena, in order to sell C.M.R.'s paintings. For many years he owned the famous "Waiting For A Chinook," more popularly known as "The Last of the Five Thousand," now owned by the Montana Stockgrowers Association and on loan to the Montana Historical Society in the museum's Russell Room.

¹² After discovery of gold at Virginia City, the most important road in Montana Territory for many years was that between Fort Benton and Virginia City, via Helena. Fortunately this route was one and the same as the Mullan Road (644 miles long to Ft. Walla Walla) for more than the first 100 miles south of Benton. The miner's trail left the military road and forked south to Helena near the early mining camp of Silver. Between the crossings of the Sun and Dearborn Rivers on the Mullan Road, was the familiar landmark of Bird-tail Divide.

¹³ Established in 1867, Fort Shaw was one of a series of military outposts built to protect miners and settlers from hostile Indians. It was vital to unhindered transport on the key Helena-to-Fort Benton freight and stage roads. Just prior to the Custer massacre, Gen. Gibbons led his troops from here to the Yellowstone country to meet the savage Sioux.

wagon. He rode his chestnut saddle horse and led his pack horse, a pinto called Paint,¹⁴ with his belongings lashed to a sawbuck saddle, tied with a neat diamond hitch.

Before reaching the mountains, we passed a small ranch house with a grain field just out of sight of the house. A few turkeys were catching grasshoppers here, not far from the roadside. Russell reached for his Colt which hung at his belt, and said that we needed meat for supper. His wife, Nancy, promptly vetoed this, and with a great show of reluctance, he holstered his gun and rode on. Of course he was only teasing Nancy, in the ribald manner of "ribbing" so common among old-timers of that period.

Several times during that day Mr. Russell rode up beside our wagon, reached in and picked my sister up in one arm and set her before him on his horse, where she rode happily, her yellow hair shining in the sun. He loved children.

We pitched our tents beside a clear mountain stream, the two camps within hailing distance of each other. During those pleasurable days everyone was privileged to select the pastimes best suited to their own taste. We kids climbed the hills and fished for trout. The men lounged around camp, talking and smoking with some fishing. The women were well occupied with bustling domestic duties and much visiting. I was surprised to note that Mr. Russell stayed in camp. He did not fish. And even around camp he never walked when he could ride a horse.

Each day a great pile of dead wood was collected near the center of the park for the evening fire. As soon as the sun had set and camp chores were done, the pyre was ignited. Everyone gathered around, reclining on blankets spread on the grass, or sitting on logs. Gay songs and stories of the old frontier days were in order. Father even popped corn. He would fill the big dish pan with white, crispy popcorn using a wire popper with



Russell and A. J. Trigg on one of many picnics which the two families participated in.

Below: C.M.R., Monte and Nancy on a camping trip.



At right, in dark shadows is Miss Josephine Trigg on a hunting party with Nancy Russell. The fine Trigg-Russell Gallery in Great Falls is a fitting memorial to the long friendship between these two families.



a long handle, popping it over a bed of glowing coals, his face shaded from the heat with his stetson hat. Mother would douse the pan generously with rich melted butter. And then we all tied into it, two-fistedly. I can still remember how delicious it was.

One night we were intrigued when Mr. Russell cut the bottom out of an empty fruit can. He then took some writing paper, picking a piece of charcoal from the edge of the fireplace, and proceeded to draw silhouettes of animals on the paper. He then placed these pictures over one end of the tin can. When held toward the fire so the light would shine through, the ingenious black silhouettes showed up dramatically.¹⁵ We children had a wonderful time guessing the name of each animal. When bedtime came and the party broke up Mother tried to reclaim these pictures, but someone else was either ahead of her or they had been carelessly burned and we never saw them again.

One day, when some wood was needed, the men felled a dry tree close to camp, cutting it into logs. They planned to drag some of it to camp with one of the buggy teams. But Charley Russell wanted to have some sport out of the chore. He suggested dragging a log in with his pack horse.

Soon he came into camp, leading Paint, in harness. Several of us gathered around, including the colored cook. Paint's traces were hooked to a single-tree, with a chain passed around the log. But when Mr. Russell tried to start work, old Paint had other ideas about dragging logs. He flatly refused to tighten the tugs. After much urging, he simply gave up and lay flat on his side in the grass. The men sat down on the log to see what Charley would do about it. Every once in a while Paint would raise his head, see the men sitting there on the log, and lay his head back in the grass. Mr. Russell was abashed. The cook nearly split his sides laughing and all of us were amused.



1897 photo of the Artist.

COURTESY J. H. MCINTOSH CALLING LAKE, ALBERTA.

Finally Russell unhitched Paint from the log. The horse promptly got to his feet and followed to camp, where Charley removed the harness and substituted saddle and bridle. Back they came with Mr. Russell confidently on top, taking down his rope. Someone passed the loop around the end of the log, Charley Russell took a dally around the saddle horn, and Paint jerked that log into camp in jig time. "He wanted us all to know that he was a saddle horse, not a harness drudge," Mr. Russell said, "a cow pony has pride."

¹⁴ When C.M.R. first arrived in Montana, he bought a horse at Helena. Upon his arrival in the Judith Basin he sold this animal and bought two typical Indian ponies. One of these, the pinto *Monte*, was his favorite for almost a quarter century. *Monte* appears in many Russell paintings. Three other favorites, after *Monte's* death in 1903, were *Grey Eagle*, *Red Bird* and *Neenah*, all of which he modeled and sometimes sketched and painted. [It appears almost certain that the pinto *Paint*, mentioned here was intended by the author to be *Monte*.]

¹⁵ Russell modeled in beeswax and clay, he painted on cardboard boxes, wrapping paper, leather, birch bark. But more importantly he painted and modeled scenes and objects completely foreign to the old West. In the Trigg collection, alone, are skillful models of Hindus, Friar Tuck, Spanish vaqueros, a masterful painting of the biblical Three Wise Men, and delightful sketches of California beaches, New York street scenes and both ancient and contemporary British history and fable.

One incident of our return trip was amusing. We came to a ranch a short time after leaving our camp. A team and wagon were just leaving the place, accompanied by a small pack of greyhounds.

Many stockmen of that day kept such dogs for chasing grey wolves and coyotes.¹⁶ Along with these aristocrats of dogdom were two small sheep dogs. We stopped a few minutes at the ranch house. Then, when we drove out on the open range, an interesting sight met our eyes. A band of broomtails¹⁷ was grazing there. Evidently the ranchmen did not want them around and the little sheep dogs knew it. They lit out after the horses and it didn't take these broomtails and dogs long to disappear. But what of the lordly greyhounds? Off to one side of the road a small knoll rose above the surrounding prairie. Upon this vantage point sat the hounds with heads up and ears cocked, watching the scene. They were trained for different game. As our ponies trotted along over the prairie road, we kept watch for the little dogs, and met them trotting back with tongues hanging. As they passed us, they looked up as if to say "See how we handled that case. The lordly greyhounds are only specialists."

One day, near the end of our vacation, two nomadic young men from Helena pulled into camp. They were quite an addition to our nightly gathering around the big fire, as they played the guitar and sang many lively range songs, which pleased C.M.R. We all sang when they started a familiar ballad, but they knew many comical songs that we had never heard—not even Mr. Russell—and they taught us some. I can still hear the youths singing: "With rocks and guns and knives, mad husbands and their wives, would give up half their lives to find and kill O'Grady's goat."

About the time I entered high school, Mrs. Russell's half sister, Ella, came to live with them. Jolly and full of fun, Ella was soon a popular addition to the

group I ran with. We partied around from house to house and attended the many dances which, in those days, were not public but were sponsored by families or by the churches. Of course, the Russells entertained, in turn; and we always enjoyed, most, the friendly, interesting evenings at their fascinating home next to the log studio.

But the log studio of the cowboy artist was the exciting place!¹⁸ A large fireplace filled most of the east wall. A skylight in the north slope of the roof afforded the right light for his brilliant, sun-filled paintings. Easy chairs and a simple divan, carelessly placed, invited one to rest. Around the walls, in profusion, hung every item that the early Montana cowboys used: guns, ropes, hats, chaps, saddle, spurs—needed as authentic models for his pictures, except horses and Indians (and these C.M.R. had indelibly inscribed in his fertile brain), photographs of friends, a few small personalized drawings that Charley loved to do—all comprised a cozy, manish room that fit his personality. Here Russell worked or swapped stories with his friends; and he was a master story teller who could fit his tales to his audience, whether in rough cow camps or refined parlor. Few men were his equal as a teller of tales.

About midnight we would walk over to the "Big House" for supper. Here in the neat parlor, so carefully kept by Mrs. Russell, was a large collection of the artist's clay figures. His clay modeling was as wonderful to me as his paintings.

¹⁶ For the first 30 years of the range cattle era, wolves were a deadly serious menace. Not only were they prolifically abundant, cunning, and dangerous in large packs, but some of them were fantastically large. Old Snowdrift—as large as a yearling steer—killed 21 cattle in two months in 1922 on Russell's old Judith Basin range, long after the menace of wolf packs had passed.

¹⁷ Usually a term of derision for an unwanted, half-wild range cayuse, many of which roamed Montana prairies in sizeable bands up to recent years.

¹⁸ "From that day [when the studio was finished in 1903] to the end of his life he loved that telephone pole building more than any other place on earth, and never finished a painting anywhere else,"—Nancy Russell.



The original of this water color was found on the floor of the cabin where C. M. R. painted in Cascade, by Ben Roberts

Around this room, about four feet from the floor, was the type of wall-moulding, popular at that time and called a "plate rail." On this rail was displayed an amazing collection of figures, ranging from wild turkeys to elephants; from a knight in armor on an armored horse, to a life-like figure of C.M.R. himself on his bay horse. I never tired of looking at these life-like models, many of them so different from those usually associated with frontier art, or a cowboy artist.

On the dinner table was a skillful center-piece painting of a winter scene in the mountains. On the table, a few inches from this picture, was a piece of native rock. On it sat a mountain sheep, of clay, looking toward the painting sat a log cabin in a canyon, with a light showing in the window. We all enjoyed these rare visits to the Russell home.

Shortly after Father's trip to Medicine Springs, he loaned our horse to Mr. Russell for a trip. There were to be several local men in the party, among them Olaf Seltzer.¹⁹ Father had told Mr. Russell that Chub would buck if spurred in the flanks, so C.M.R. was mindful of the chance to have fun with someone. During the trip, each member of the party took a turn at wrangling horses. When it came to Olaf Seltzer's turn, he wanted

to look the part, so he put on chaps and spurs before he climbed on old Chub to round-up the other horses. Chub, as usual, took his time in getting started. Charley Russell had told Mr. Seltzer to give him the spurs. Olaf followed instructions all right, and Chub piled him, high, wide and handsome. Afterwards, Mr. Russell never missed a chance to tell this story when he found Mr. Seltzer among a bunch who hadn't heard of the episode. In after years, when I was then riding Chub, Charley often asked me, "How's the old hoss; will he take the spurs?"

The last time I saw the Russell family was at the mountain resort of Lincoln in 1918. Father and Mother were living there then, Father having sold the Como Co. and bought the general store in Lincoln. Their living quarters were attached to the store building.

Father had told Charley Russell much about the Lincoln country and Charley wanted to visit there.²⁰ So late in August

¹⁹ O. M. Seltzer, a very competent Great Falls artist followed closely in the footsteps of C. M. R. as to style and subject matter, but never quite attained the same perfection or fame.

²⁰ Since its bid for fame failed—as a bonanza placer camp—Lincoln has remained an isolated, scenic, hunter's and fisherman's headquarters, with a year-around population of less than 50 families.

the Russells, with their adopted son, arrived.²¹ It was a cloudy afternoon and there had been some rain. Mrs. Russell, who always drove the car, had driven from their summer home on Lake McDonald²² in Glacier Park, through Kalispell and Missoula, then up the Blackfoot River. The road up the Blackfoot, although in beautiful country, then was one of the roughest in a state saddled with bad roads.

Mr. Russell was in his usual hearty mood, although tired, but Mrs. Russell was worn out. She said that she never would travel that canyon again. We had a good visit in the evening with the Russells and the next day they all gathered at my ranch and enjoyed a ranch dinner. Charley and Dad had a fine time looking over the stock, corrals and barn and recalling old times and old-timers. The Russells left for Great Falls the next day. I do not recall seeing Charles M. Russell again. Father died in 1923 and I was in Great Falls very little after that time. C.M.R. passed away in 1926, mourned by many friends, and Montana and the world lost perhaps the most competent of the great contemporary painters of the Western frontier; and certainly one of this state's most remarkable citizens.²³



"The Knight of the Plain As He Was." Pen and ink drawing by C.M.R.

CONTRACT AND AGREEMENT.

Agreement between Charles Marion Russell, of Great Falls, Montana, and William Bleasdel Cameron, of Saint Paul, Minnesota, made 30th. of September, 1897.

The said C.M. Russell agrees to make for the said W.B. Cameron twenty black and white oil paintings about 24 by 18 inches in size each and twenty pen sketches about 12 by 8 inches each, composing a pictorial history of western life, the whole to be completed within a reasonable time, or by the first of January, 1898, if possible.

The said W.B. Cameron agrees to pay to the said C.M. Russell the sum of fifteen dollars for each painting upon delivery and fifty dollars upon delivery of the pen sketches.

It is further agreed between the parties that the paintings are to be reproduced and advertised from month to month in the WESTERN FIELD AND STREAM, published at Saint Paul, Minnesota, and that they are also to be published in two books, upon completion, the paintings in one and the sketches in another, such books to be placed for sale upon the market, and that the said C.M. Russell shall have a one-third interest in the copyrights of such books and of all profits which may arise from their sale as aforesaid.

Witness.
Mannie Russell. *C.M. Russell*
 on behalf of himself and for Western Field and Stream.

Before his death in 1926, Russell had sold paintings for more than \$10,000. Yet, as indicated by this old contract, he was selling 40 originals for \$350 in 1897. On today's market these Russell's would bring at least \$25,000.

COURTESY OF J. H. MCINTOSH

²¹ Childless for 20 years, the Russells in 1916 adopted a baby boy, whom they named Jack. "ours wasnt waring our iron but his brands vented so hes ours all right and we shure love him," Russell wrote in a letter to a friend.

²² Because he loved the majestic beauty of Glacier Park, Russell visited the area many times before its establishment as a national park. He bought land shortly after Dimon Apgar homesteaded there in 1895 and founded the town of Apgar. He named his camp Bull Head Lodge, commemorating the bull buffalo skull which was his trademark for so many years.

²³ After ailing for the last two years of his life, Charles M. Russell died on Oct. 24, 1926. His body was carried to the grave, as he had requested, in a horse-drawn hearse, followed by a riderless saddle horse. One of the Old West's foremost historiographers, J. Frank Dobie, said: "Russell was the greatest painter that ever painted a range man, a range cow, a range horse or a Plains Indian!"

a bloody 1873 fight between hunters and Indians touched off an international incident.

MASSACRE AT CYPRESS HILLS



Frequent massacres darkly stain the pages of western history. But few of them challenge the historian as much as the skirmish between whites and Indians in the low-lying Cypress Hills of southern Saskatchewan. Here in May 1873 a bloody fight between a party of hunters and traders from Fort Benton and a band of North Assiniboines touched off an ugly international incident which greatly heightened the tension already existing between Britain and the United States and fanned the smoldering embers of national spirit into angry flame on both sides of the international boundary in North America.

In such an atmosphere, national bias quickly distorted fact into fiction to create as vigorous a set of legends and myths as surround any similar incident in American history. To the south, American historians pieced together a story of valiant frontiersmen bravely fighting for their lives against fearful odds as vicious and depraved savages sought to "wipe them out." To the north,

Canadian historians painted a dark picture of violent American border ruffians, drunk with whiskey and greed, brutally slaughtering innocent and defenseless Indians without purpose or justification. Neither interpretation seems defensible in view of the available evidence, and neither does credit to the objectivity or scholarship of those who, by reason of inadequate research or national bias, have perpetuated legend as history or myth as truth.

Tragedy at Cypress Hills began with a commonplace frontier incident. A small party of wolfers, returning from a winter of hunting in the northern reaches of the Whoop-Up country, camped on the Teton river only five miles from Fort Benton. Since they were so close to the river town and were surrounded by ranches, the men relaxed the vigil so carefully maintained during the long trip down the Whoop-Up trail. But they were betrayed by this false sense of security; and while their night herders slept, a band of thieving Indians made off with their horses. The men awoke to find themselves the victims of an honorable but dangerous Indian sport.¹

Here was another of the bitter conflicts between the white man's highly

We feel honored to publish, in advance, this chapter from the forthcoming book by the brilliant young historian, Paul F. Sharp, of Iowa State College. Dr. Sharp's latest work has tentatively been titled WHOOP-UP COUNTRY, A Study of Canadian-American Relations, 1863-83. This article was largely researched at the Montana Historical Library, and although it follows Hugh A. Dempsey's CYPRESS HILLS MASSACRE, the treatment is so different that it could not be denied immediate publication.

A WHOOP-UP COUNTRY Preview

By Paul F. Sharp



I. G. Baker store at Fort Benton; and Fort Standoff in the Whoop-Up Country.

developed sense of property ownership and the Indian's quite different set of values. To the plains Indians, horse stealing was a highly regarded achievement, bringing to the successful thief much of the same honor and recognition which modern American society confers upon the baseball player who steals home base. But the wolfers did not regard it as a game. To be left on the plains without their horses was a serious matter, and they broke camp thoroughly aroused by the audacity as well as by the success of the Indian raiders. After ascertaining that their horses were indeed stolen and not estrayed, they moved down the trail into Fort Benton, a party of angry and determined men.

In Fort Benton, their pleas for assistance in apprehending the culprits and in recovering their stolen property fell on deaf ears. There, the military commander refused their request, arguing that his force of army regulars was too small to provide an escort for such a mission. Thus, left to their own devices, the wolfers organized an expedition, one fated to violence and bloodshed through the absence of authorized law enforcement.

Moreover, the Whoop-Up country into which they rode was virtually a derelict land, possessing neither effective laws nor agents to enforce them. This vast region had only recently been transferred from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Dominion of Canada, and no officers of the Crown were present to stay their hands or prevent violence.

With surprising speed the expedition outfitted itself for the trek across the plains. There is no evidence that the men lingered in Benton, finding strength or courage in the many saloons facing the busy river front. Despite this lack of evidence, several writers have made much of the party's fondness for "Montana Redeye," and one writer, claiming information directly from the Indians, describes the manner in which they spent the winter in the river town nursing their wrath: "In many a barroom session the wolfers boasted of the dreadful vengeance they would heap on the redmen when the poplars were in leaf again."² But this is entirely fictitious, for they left on the following day.

The men who rode north from Benton that day were typical hunters, trappers and wolfers of the high border country, neither better nor worse. Experienced in Indian warfare and schooled in plains lore, they were quite capable of caring for themselves whatever the emergency. Heavily armed with the latest repeating rifles and revolvers, they thought them-

¹ This seems to be the only phase of the entire incident above dispute. Major sources for this aspect of the story are the eye-witness accounts of the participants, including John C. Duval, "Cypress Hills Massacre, A True Account," *Helena Independent*, Nov. 18, 1886; Donald Graham's account as reprinted in Hugh Dempsey, "Cypress Hills Massacre," *Montana Magazine of History*, Autumn, 1953, 1-9; testimony in the extradition trial in *Helena Weekly Herald*, July 8, 1875; and testimony in the Winnipeg trial, *Winnipeg Standard*, June 24, 1876, and *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 24, 1876; a "true account" in the *Fort Benton Record*, June 26, 1875; and the first newspaper account of the fight in the *Helena Daily Herald*, June 11, 1873.

² P. M. Abel, "The Cypress Hills Massacre," *Country Guide* (Winnipeg) May 1951.

selves a match for any roaming band of hostile Indians they might encounter.

To establish the character of the men in the little party is a difficult exercise in historical evidence. Testimony varies widely, depending upon the bias of the witnesses. On the whole, it seems clear that thus far historians have too harshly judged the group. By contemporary western standards they were typical frontiersmen — "thirteen Kit Carsons" as one newspaper dramatically phrased it; "advanced guards of civilization" in the no less modest words of yet another.³

By the standards of eastern society, whether Canadian or American, they were crude vulgarians, whose occupations and environment had shaped them to a coarseness and toughness thought characteristic of the frontier. To argue from this, however, that they were naturally cold-blooded murderers capable of any crime to satiate their passion for vengeance is to reach a conclusion rather more severe than is justified by the available records of the careers of the men involved.

Only Thomas Hardwick had a "tough" reputation, one fully described by his sobriquet, "Green River Renegade." Most of the others, however, were veterans of previous conflicts with Indians, which had left them victims of the universal western view that violence and bloodshed were inevitable in their contacts with the redmen. But the judgment that they were therefore capable of any crime, however depraved, is an unwarranted assumption based on the widely accepted exaggeration that western society comprised "desperadoes, murderers and degenerates, in short, a majority of the white population."⁴ This picture of the western community may provide a proper atmosphere for a Hollywood thriller, but it does not accord with the facts of the social history of the region.

These were men of the West whose experience had taught them to fear violence from the Indian. Some of them were also veterans of the Civil War with

the experience of four years of violent conflict shaping their conduct. This was a dangerous combination, for it prepared them to regard violence against the Indians as natural and to praise the destruction of Indian power as promoting civilization. Thus, they were ill-equipped to grant concessions to avoid conflict or to seek peaceful answers to urgent problems.

This was also an international brigade. Though denounced in contemporary Canadian newspapers as "American gangsters," "American scum," and "American frontiersmen," and stigmatized by later historians as "one of the Missouri river gangs," or as "American gunmen," it was actually an Anglo-American party with citizens of both nationalities well represented. Of those whose nationalities can be ascertained, Ed Grace and Donald Graham were Anglo-Canadians, while George Hammond, Jeff Devereaux, S. Vincent and Alexis Lebompard were among the several French-Canadians involved in the melee at Cypress Hills.

With all possible speed and without particular caution, the Benton party pushed hard on the trail of the stolen horses. Natural leadership quickly asserted itself so that without an election or any formal balloting, John Evans took command. This large, well-built, good-natured frontiersman was dubbed the "Chief" by his companions in recognition of their confidence in his ability to direct the band in its dangerous mission.

Evans had demonstrated this same quality of leadership during the previous season when he served as captain of the Spitzee cavalry. This extra-legal organization of trappers and wolfers in the Highwood river region sought to prevent the sale of rapid-firing weapons and ammunition to the Indians by traders from Fort Benton. While this was its manifest purpose, many Benton traders believed its real design was to force the

T. C. Power company out of the lucrative Whoop-Up traffic, thus leaving I. G. Baker's traders in undisputed possession. Certainly Tom Power and his chief lieutenant, John J. Healy, were convinced that Evans and his Spitzee cavalry played this devious game.

On top of this, George Hammond, who was soon to join Evans in the fight at Cypress Hills, had openly challenged Johnny Healy in the days of the Spitzee cavalry. The two traders came to blows over the Spitzee affair, accusing each other of "dirty cowardice" and "thieving deceit." Thus several of the chief figures in the struggle for control of the Whoop-Up trade the previous year were now involved in the fight at Cypress Hills. T. C. Power and his friends had not forgotten the past incident, nor had they forgiven the I. G. Baker people for what they regarded a vicious attempt to ruin their trade.

When I. G. Baker's allies, Evans and Hammond in particular, became involved in the shameful affair at Cypress Hills, the Power traders found an unexpected opportunity for revenge and an unlooked for chance to reverse the pressure of the previous year. Now they hoped to exclude the Baker traders from the field. But their maneuvers were far more subtle than the crude threats of the Spitzee cavalry, for they used the American and Canadian governments to eliminate their rivals and to advance the firm's monopolistic goals. Thus the affair of the Spitzee cavalry, which has always been treated as an isolated incident, is of greatest importance in understanding the hue and cry which accompanied the Cypress Hills melee.

But such thoughts were far from their minds as the Benton men hastened northward. At the Marias river a near tragedy threw a dark shadow of gloom over the entire group when one of the men almost lost his life while fording the river. There, three of the party were ordered to drive the horses across the swollen stream while the others made rafts to

carry their food and equipment to the farther side.

All went well in the fording operation until one of the three tired in midstream and suddenly called for help. Panic momentarily paralyzed the party and the tension greatly increased when their tired horses refused to re-enter the water to assist the drowning man. Finally, Donald Graham swam back to his companion and pulled him out of the treacherous waters, but the two men were completely exhausted and the party was forced to spend the remainder of the day resting and recruiting its strength.

On the following morning the men resumed their journey, traveling night and day with but short rests and tenaciously following a trail which led them north into the Cypress Hills. In this rough and eroded region with its deep ravines and thick stands of coyote willows, the trail became too faint to follow and they were forced to give up their search. This was disappointing, but Abel Farwell's trading post on Battle Creek was only a few miles distant and there they hoped to rest their horses and gather information concerning the stolen property.

When about five miles from Fort Farwell, as the crude little trading post was called, the men halted to make camp. Here they decided to send two of their number into the trading area to reconnoiter. Thus it fell to John Evans and Thomas Hardwick to reveal their presence to Farwell and to secure what information he might have about their mission.

Farwell greeted his old friends cordially, urging them to bring in the rest of the party to join his men for dinner and to spend the night at his post. Evans, however, was too concerned about the lost trail for social amenities and pressed Farwell for information. He was

³ *Fort Benton Record*, June 26, 1875; *Bozeman Times*, July 6, 1875.

⁴ John Peter Turner, *The Northwest Mounted Police*, I: 79.

particularly anxious about the nearby camp of Little Soldier's North Assiniboines, where some of his men believed they would find the stolen horses. He bluntly came to the point, were they the thieves? "No," said the trader, "the camp has only five or six horses, and they have not got yours."⁵

This was disappointing news and Evans hurried back to his companions to share it with them. It was a cruel blow to their high hopes of finding the horses on the morrow and of returning at once to Fort Benton. Evans later recalled his bitter frustration: "sick and disappointed at not having obtained our horses and tired after a long day's ride, we laid down to sleep after exchanging news."⁶ Hardwick, however, remained with Farwell to enjoy the comforts of the little fort, including its well-stocked liquor chest.

The Benton party reached Fort Farwell at a most unfortunate time. For weeks the surrounding district had been feverish with excitement as restless Indians, frightened half-breeds and greedy traders lived under an armed truce. The very evening of their arrival witnessed the climax of an ugly incident dating back to the previous month when a band of seventeen Indians abused Farwell's hospitality and slipped away with thirty of his horses while his guards slept. Among these horses was one owned by the French-Canadian, George Hammond. On the night the Benton men arrived at the fort, this horse was returned to Hammond who generously paid the Indian bringing it in. Unhappily, the disappearance of this same horse the following day touched off the fight which became known to history as the Cypress Hills massacre.

Fort Farwell was only one of four trading posts built in this district in the autumn of 1872. After the winter's trading, however, I. G. Baker's bulltrains collected the furs and two of the posts were abandoned. Abel Farwell, assisted by his interpreter, Alexis Lebompard,

continued to trade as a representative of T. C. Power Company of Benton. Less than two hundred yards away, but across the creek, another post remained open under the management of Moses Solomon. In this post, as assistants or as hunters, lived three other white men soon to be deeply involved in the fracas, John McFarland, George Bell and Philander Vogle.

So tense were conditions around these two posts that several Indian skirmishes had already served as grim harbingers of the approaching tragedy. Fort Solomon was the particular target of Indian resentment, for Solomon and his traders had treated the Indians badly, often reducing them to drunken insensibility and cheating them shamelessly. By May, hatred for the white traders had reached fever pitch among the Indians and plans for a showdown with the callous traders were already underway when the Benton party arrived.

Not far from the two trading posts a large settlement of half-breeds watched this guerrilla warfare with growing apprehension. A wave of fear swept this community of freighters and hunters when a band of enraged Indians killed a white trader named Paul Rivers.

Frequent Indian threats to wipe out Fort Solomon reached the unhappy Metis community during the month of April. On one occasion, the Indians bluntly warned Joseph Laverdure, a half-breed freighter in Abel Farwell's employ, that despite the close ties between their people and his, the Metis would be hurt if they got in the way when "a hundred guns go off."⁷

Sometime later, and only two days before the fight, a badly frightened Assiniboine appeared in the half-breed winter camp. His story of an impending attack upon Fort Solomon confirmed the Metis' fears and gave added emphasis to the repeated warnings already current in their camp.

On top of this, the half-breeds received



This picture of the teeming inland port of Fort Benton was taken about the time of the Cypress Hills incident. These freight teams of J. G. McLean & Co. are preparing to move to the mining camps or the "whiskey forts" along the Whoop-Up Trail into Canada. Trade was brisk in both directions.

a direct warning less than two hours before the fight, when another Indian from Little Soldier's camp added his testimony. "It is a pity you half-breeds are here, for we have determined to clean out the whites and take all their stock. As soon as the Americans come out of the fort we intend to take all they have and if they make any resistance we will fight them."⁸

Into this hell's broth of tension and hatred rode the men from Benton. Here was an explosive situation. Only the slightest spark would set off another bloody conflict so familiar in the relations between whites and Indians on the Great Plains.

To make disaster a certainty on that Sunday in early May, whites and redmen alike spent much of the morning drinking heavily. Moses Solomon's whiskey trade with the Indians had already caused great difficulties; now Abel Farwell joined in the traffic by providing drinks from the supplies he had purchased earlier from William Rowe when that trader abandoned his wretched traffic and departed for Fort Benton. Farwell later denied that he ever traded in spirits, arguing that he bought out Rowe's stock only "to keep him out of the business."⁹ While Farwell's sentiments appear entirely commendable, there is adequate evidence to indict him along

with Solomon for this reprehensible business.¹⁰

Shortly after noon the Sabbath calm was broken by George Hammond's shout that the Indians had again stolen his horse. Quickly the Benton traders crowded around the excited man demanding to know what had happened. "What is it all about?" they asked.

"Why, they have stolen my horse again, let's go over and take theirs in return," said the thoroughly aroused Hammond. To the Metis he told a similar story in French, ending his recital with the threat, "For that horse I'll have two." Gun in hand, he started angrily for the Indian camp closely followed by several of the Benton party who were willing to assist him in recovering the missing animal.

What really happened from that moment onward is shrouded in a haze of

⁸ Farwell's testimony is found in several scattered sources. The chief source used throughout this account is in Consular Dispatch 219, James Wickes Taylor to J. L. Cadwalader, Sept. 22, 1875, General Records of the State Department, National Archives. Other accounts are in *Helena Weekly Herald*, July 8, 15, 22, 1875; *Winnipeg Standard*, June 24, 1876; *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 26, 1876.

⁹ *Fort Benton Record*, June 26, 1875.

¹⁰ Consular Dispatch 219, Taylor to Cadwalader, Sept. 22, 1875.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Winnipeg Standard*, June 24, 1876.

¹³ Farwell's reputation as a whiskey trader was widely known in Fort Benton. The evidence of Baptiste Champagne (Consular Dispatch 219) is particularly damaging to his case.

contradictory and confused testimony. There is no thoroughly reliable account of the massacre and most of the witnesses contradicted their own testimony at one time or other. To reconstruct with complete accuracy the detailed events at Cypress Hills is impossible, but the main events can be pieced together from the maze of evidence.

Abel Farwell testified later that he sought vainly to restrain Hammond, urging caution with the plea that the Indians did not have his horse. When this failed to appease the determined French-Canadian, Farwell volunteered to go into the Indian camp alone to speak to Little Soldier.

Immediately, he turned toward the Indian camp, hurrying through the coulee and across the remaining distance to Little Soldier's tent. There, he quizzed the Indian chief about the missing horse, which Little Soldier insisted had not been stolen but was even then grazing on a slight hill some distance beyond Farwell's post. Unhappily, Little Soldier was too drunk to act decisively or to hold his young warriors in check. They at once showed keen resentment at the provocative manner in which the white men approached their camp and began abusing the traders with taunts and insults. Farwell used every possible device to quiet the Indians and get them to listen to reason. Little Soldier readily acquiesced, even going so far as to offer two of his own horses as hostages to Hammond until the missing horse could be recovered.

Meanwhile, this seeming hostility by the young braves frightened the Benton men. Their apprehension quickly became alarm as they discerned the women hurrying away and the men casting off their garments in apparent preparation for combat. To protect themselves in the coming fight, the men crowded into the coulee which was three to eight feet deep and ran within fifty yards of the Indian camp. This movement, in turn, aroused Little Soldier and his Indians to

ask why the white men took such menacing positions.

At this point, Farwell later claimed, he heard Thomas Hardwick calling from the coulee and ordering him to get out of the way or get shot. With a warning to the Indians to scatter, Farwell returned to the men in the coulee to plead for sanity. "Would you shoot at a party of Indians when there was a white man among them?" he asked.

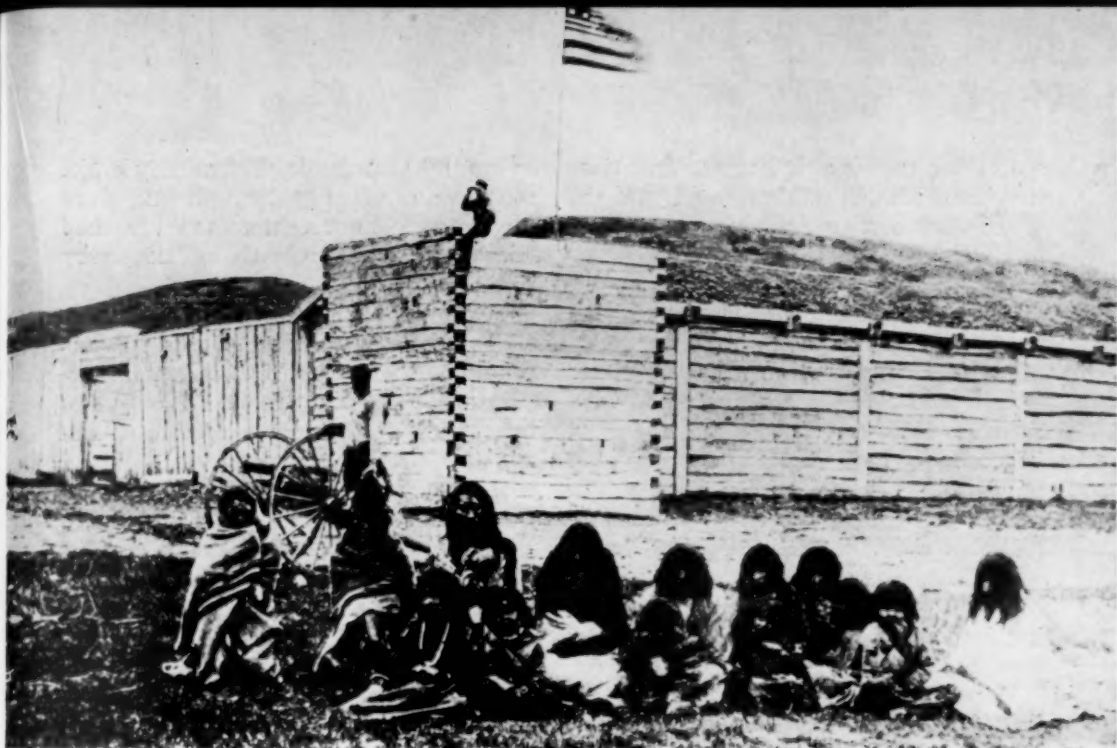
"If you had come out when you were first told, we would have had a good shot," answered the sullen Hardwick.

Farwell then explained Little Soldier's proposition, but the men refused to believe his story. They feared his duplicity or, at best, his inability to understand the Indian's speech. To play for time, Farwell said he would get Alexis Lebompard to confirm his story and turned to call his interpreter from the fort. Before he could move more than a few steps, he saw George Hammond fire into the Indians and a wild fight immediately broke out.

Protected by their cutbank fortress, the whites poured volley after volley into the exposed Indians with deadly effect. Three times, however, the courageous warriors charged the coulee, only to be repulsed with heavy losses. Years later, time had not dimmed John Duval's memory of the courage and tenacity of Little Soldier's braves: "Three times those plucky warriors returned to almost certain death."¹¹

After their third costly attack, the Indians withdrew to a coulee behind their camp from which they kept up a vigorous fire against the whites. To dislodge them from this position, Evans and Hardwick mounted their horses and rode to a hill overlooking the Indian stronghold. From this vantage point, the two men raked the Indian ranks with telling effect.

Instead of fleeing, the Assiniboines executed a flanking movement of their own through a thicket of willows and



An early picture of Bloods outside Fort Whoop-Up. Note the corner blockhouse, stockade walls and the trader standing near the cannon, left center.

small trees. This maneuver was so effective that Hardwick and Evans were suddenly in grave danger and several of the white men rushed to their aid. At the head of this rescue party rode Ed Grace, "a Canadian of great bravery." His rashness cost him his life, for the moment he entered the woods, a concealed Indian sent a bullet through his heart.

Grace's death greatly sobered the Benton party. Soon they withdrew to the fort which commanded a view of the Indian camp and from which they laid down a field of fire so effective in its devastation that it prevented the Indians from returning to their lodges. At nightfall, they scattered, giving up their camp and leaving their dead on the field.

From this point onward, Farwell's account is a saturnalia of unrestrained bloodlust and brutality. Little Soldier, too drunk to flee, was found hiding in a lodge where he was killed by S. Vincent; his head was cut off and mounted on a pole as a grisly trophy of victory. Farwell also charged that Indian squaws left in

the camp were abused and children brutally slain along with adults.

At dawn the Benton men finished their gruesome work. A melancholy scene of death and violence greeted them at the Indian camp, for defiling the fresh greenness of the Spring meadow were the bodies of dead warriors, and scattered about by the capricious whims of combat lay the pitifully few possessions of the Indians. After burying some of the dead, the white men pulled down the empty lodges and burned the abandoned clothing in a great pyre.¹²

Next they faced the unpleasant task of burying their own dead. After some debate, they decided to place Grace's body under the floor of Solomon's fort. Then, to conceal his burial place from Indian discovery and to prevent the enraged survivors from later mutilating his body, they soaked the green logs with coal oil and burned the post to the ground.

That afternoon they resumed their

¹¹ Duval, "Cypress Hills Massacre."

¹² Contemporary estimates of the number of Indians slain in the fight range from fifteen to thirty-six, later estimates reaching two hundred, seem greatly exaggerated.

search for the missing horses. This time they rode almost straight west into the Whoop-Up country, where they hoped to find a party of Bloods alleged to be the thieves. Then too, the Cypress Hills district had suddenly become very unhealthy for white men, for only twenty miles north lay a large camp of Crees, friends and allies of the Assiniboines.

Some days later they reached Fort Whoop-Up where they learned of a camp of Bloods farther west which might shelter their stolen property. With more rashness than wisdom they rode on to what was nearly a second disaster, for this camp turned out to be one of one-hundred and fifty lodges of well-armed mounted Indians.

Here they were greeted with open hostility. Donald Graham's account of the affair, the only detailed record of this incident, is tense with suppressed excitement. With their weapons ready for instant use the Indians sullenly welcomed their uninvited guests. One young boy rode beside the white men, flexing his bow and arrow and repeating again and again, "I know I can kill a white man."

With a courage more apparent than real, the men rode directly to the head chief's tent. Here they found an ancient chief, clad in the blue coat of an American soldier but wearing a King George medal on his breast. To him they told their story, but were much relieved to learn that their horses were not in that camp. Had trouble started, Graham and his companions "knew that not one of us would get away."¹³

Without further ceremony or argument, the worried men rode out of the camp. Out of sight of the Indians, they spurred their horses and rode hard until nightfall, putting as much distance between them and the Bloods as possible. Even then, they mounted a strong guard during the night to prevent a surprise attack from their late hosts.

Meanwhile, Farwell and several of the Cypress traders hurried to Benton

as rapidly as possible. There they broke the news of the bloody fight and were acclaimed noble frontiersmen who had taught the Indians a costly but necessary lesson.

In the years that followed, Abel Farwell's accounts of these events was accepted without qualification as an accurate eye-witness report. But several interesting problems are at once apparent in his testimony. Basic to his story is the claim that he honestly played the role of peacemaker, seeking to hold in check the bloodlust and passion of murderers. But this is open to question, for it was widely known among the traders that Farwell could not speak the Indians' language, except for the simplest terms used in the trading. Lebompard, his interpreter, later testified, "I knew from my relation with Farwell and the Indians that he could not understand them."¹⁴

Far more important is the question of Farwell's disinterestedness. His lack of prejudice is the foundation upon which his account rests; thus far it has been taken for granted. From the beginning of the controversy, however, Farwell faced accusations such as "paid informer," "hired tool," and "biased witness." But these always appeared to be false charges of men facing justice through the honest testimony of a disinterested witness who sacrificed friendship and social status to tell the hard truth.

This analysis of Farwell's account is rudely shattered by evidence unearthed by the State Department in its effort to learn the truth about the affair. By 1875, the fight at Cypress Hills had become an international incident, compelling Secretary of State Hamilton Fish to launch a thorough investigation. To this difficult task he assigned James Wickes Taylor, distinguished publicist and longtime American consul in Winnipeg.

Taylor's investigations revealed a startling situation, one which raised serious doubts as to the trader's reliability as a witness. Farwell, he informed the

State Department, "was the instrument of a scheme" launched by T. C. Power and Company "to misrepresent what was an ordinary Indian fight, as an outrage by the whites, and by criminal prosecutions, to exclude competition from the Cypress Hills in the trade for buffalo robes."¹⁵

Why historians have ignored the mountain of evidence from eye-witnesses other than Farwell and his Indian wife is another interesting mystery. Accounts by active participants who testified with a noose about their necks are properly suspect. There remains, however, yet another set of important records. These are the eye-witness reports of men not involved in the actual fighting, but who watched safely from a distance. Their testimony sheds considerable light on the entire affair, especially on such moot questions as to which side fired first. Joseph Laverdure, for example, testified that "the Assiniboines fired first, but not at the Americans, they fired at random giving out cries of contempt or provocation."¹⁶ The Benton men then replied to the challenge thus touching off the fight.

Another Metis witness, Joseph Vital Turcotte, testified in a similar vein. "I saw them cross the river to go to the Indian camp; they went forward near the coulee; four Indians came towards them naked, apparently challenging them; the Benton party were on foot, as they were going towards the coulee four shots were fired by the Indians; almost at the same moment the Americans fired."¹⁷ Thus, Farwell's testimony on such a simple matter as how the fight started was contradicted by reliable witnesses.

Whatever the truth about the Cypress Hills incident, its aftermath is perfectly clear. News of the brutal fight aroused greatest indignation throughout Canada. It came as a climax to a decade of lawlessness and crime in the Whoop-Up country and deeply offended the sense of law and order of the eastern provinces. The shocking story from Battle Creek,

gaining in exaggeration and distortion as it spread, hastened the formation of a police force to patrol the vast unoccupied plains north of the forty-ninth parallel. Though the Macdonald government had already introduced a bill in Parliament to organize the Northwest Mounted Police, the terrible news from the West reinforced the need for immediate action. Public clamor to end the disgraceful whiskey trade from Fort Benton and the keen resentment at this invasion of Canadian sovereignty by freebooters and whiskey traders strengthened the sinews of Canadian nationalism and touched the raw nerves of anti-Americanism, always close to the surface.

Official investigation of the incident began in Washington. In August 1873, letters protesting the outrage reached the Department of Interior from its Indian agents. Since the affair had occurred on British soil, the department immediately transferred the case to Secretary of State Hamilton Fish for action. Two days later, Fish dispatched a note with all available evidence to Sir Edward Thornton, British Minister in Washington.¹⁸ Thus, a frontier fight occurring on the periphery of Canadian-American settlement in the West became a diplomatic question involving Washington, Ottawa and London.

For the next two years, Canadian officials sought the men responsible for the Cypress Hills fight. Sir John A. Macdonald launched the inquiry by instructing Gilbert McMicken, commissioner of Dominion police in Winnipeg, to investigate the case. McMicken failed to reach Bismarck before the river season closed, however, and his orders were cancelled. By the following year the

¹⁵ Dempsey, "Cypress Hills Massacre" 9.

¹⁶ *Winnipeg Standard*, June 24, 1876.

¹⁷ Consular Dispatch 241, Taylor to Fish, August 1, 1876.

¹⁸ *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 24, 1876.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

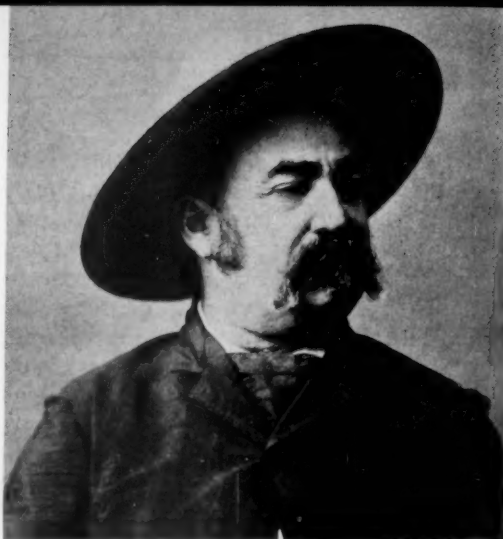
¹⁸ Fish to Thornton, August 15, 1873.

Northwest Mounted Police were organized and took over the investigations.¹⁹

Not until the Spring of 1875 were the police able to take action on information in their possession. In May, Lt. Col. Acheson G. Irvine was specially commissioned to continue the investigation by going to Fort Benton to prepare extradition warrants for the alleged murderers. Irvine's trip to Fort Benton, up the river from Bismarck on the little steamer *Fontanelle* and then across the Indian infested prairie, opened his eyes to the problems of law enforcement in the American West. Good fortune also led him to find Alexis Lebompard at a little post on the Missouri river. Without revealing his real purpose, Irvine employed the aging plainsman as a guide and from him secured considerable valuable information. Lebompard later proved to be an important witness in the trials at Helena and Winnipeg.

Fort Benton merchants greeted the Canadian officer cordially and assisted him in his mission. Irvine found the Conrad brothers, Charles and William, particularly valuable sources of information. These partners of I. G. Baker, along with the rest of the business community in Fort Benton, were weary of the costly and wasteful conflicts disturbing their trade in the Whoop-Up country. They had earlier welcomed the arrival of the Mounties as a guarantee of peace in that troubled region; now they were determined to assist in ridding their community of men who persisted in regarding Fort Benton as a frontier fur trading post rather than a commercial and financial center.

Meanwhile, Col. James F. Macleod, an assistant commissioner in the Force, entered Montana from Fort Macleod on a similar mission. The two officers were so successful in completing their case against Evans and his men that on May 7th the British Minister in Washington requested warrants for their arrest and extradition on charges of murdering the Assiniboine Indians two years



When local officials at Ft. Benton refused to extradite or arrest 14 members of the Cypress Hills party, U. S. Marshal X. Biedler found and arrested seven, there, in June 1875. Public reaction was violent.

earlier. Warrants were therefore issued for the arrest of John Evans, Thomas Hardwick, Trevanian Hale, John Duval, George Bell, Jeff Devereaux, Philander Vogle, George Hammond, John McFarland, James Hughes, James Marshall, Charles Smith, Charles Harper and Moses Solomon.

Federal machinery was set in motion at once to apprehend the alleged murderers. Officials in Washington instructed Montana's territorial governor, B. F. Potts, to cooperate with Canadian officers; and United States marshals Charles D. Hard and X. Biedler were sent similar instructions.

On June 21, 1875, seven of the wanted men were arrested in Fort Benton. Local officers, including Sheriff Hale of Chouteau county, refused to assist Canadian and federal officials. Fears of an aroused public opinion cooled their enthusiasm for cooperation and hopes for continued public favor paralyzed their will to act. So the arrests were made by federal marshals assisted by army troops stationed at Fort Benton. This unpopular action by federal officers increased the tension between local and federal officials and clearly revealed one of the major difficulties of enforcing laws on the American side of the frontier. Under federal guard, the men were then transferred

to Helena for an extradition hearing before United States Commissioner W. E. Cullen.

Public reaction throughout Montana was immediate and violent. The arrests aroused intense, even hysterical opposition, and touched off public demonstrations throughout the territory. Causes for this reaction are not difficult to find, for the arrests violated the universally accepted view in the American West that white men could take the law into their own hands against the aborigines. Many Montanans also objected to the arrests as a use of governmental power to assist the Hudson's Bay company in its efforts to eliminate American competition from the Whoop-Up country. Independent traders in Fort Benton felt keenly on this issue and refused to believe that the Canadian government acted in good faith. For many years the belief persisted that the Northwest Mounted Police only served the interests of the company "in their attempt to monopolize the trade of the Northwest."²⁰

Deep-seated tensions and prejudices came to the surface in this heated controversy. Petitions circulated widely denouncing "British invasion" of American rights and picturing the Benton men as innocent victims of the "Anglo-Canadian Indian pacification policy." Anglo-phobia had its brief day in Montana as a result of the arrests, for the extradition trial at Helena opened the floodgates of prejudice to release a torrent of bitterness that reached astonishing heights of vituperation and exaggeration.

Always in the foreground of this agitation was a small but highly articulate group of Irish Fenians in Fort Benton. "Col." J. J. Donnelly, lawyer, justice of the peace, and professional agitator, led the Fenians in their attempt to make a *cause celebre* of the arrests. Donnelly's long record as a Fenian spokesman recommended him for this role. The self-styled "Colonel" had already led two abortive invasions of Canada, one from New Hampshire and another from North Da-

kota. Now the "Colonel" occupied the stage of public clamor for a last moment of glory, preaching hatred of neighboring Canada and her British institutions.

More important in arousing public fears was the universal sentiment that Indian power could only be held in restraint by such incidents as that at Cypress Hills. Citizens in the Bozeman district, for example, protested the arrest of Evans and his friends with the argument that "there is but one way to punish and bring to account these savage perpetrators—that is, to pursue and punish according to their own method of warfare."²¹

Many Montana editors and spokesmen openly defended the massacre. They argued that it was a positive good, insisting that it was not a crime, but offered a salutary lesson to the redmen. The editor of the *Fort Benton Record* summarized this argument with the pointed question, "if the whites are to be punished for protecting their lives against Indians, will they not at once renew the hostilities of former years, under the impression that no matter what depredations they commit, their victims alone will be the sufferers?"²² If the Cypress Hills incident did nothing else, it exposed the terrible failure of American Indian policy and revealed the tragic weakness of a frontier philosophy which argued for the rule of law for one segment of the community, while allowing the anarchy of violence for another.

On July 7, 1875, Commissioner Cullen began the hearings. Though excited miners pressed into the crowded courthouse and exuberant demonstrations broke out in neighboring saloons and filled Helena's streets, Cullen kept his head and refused to be stampeded by local prejudice and clamor.

²⁰ John Peter Turner, *Northwest Mounted Police* I: 84-5; 101-2; 217-34.

²¹ For a vigorous statement of this argument see letter to editor from Jack Blount, *Fort Benton Record*, May 15, 1875.

²² *Bozeman Times*, July 6, 1875.

²³ *Fort Benton Record*, June 26, 1875; Dec. 21, 1877.

Much of the best legal talent in the territory matched skill and resourcefulness in the heat of the packed courtroom. Colonel Wilbur F. Sanders presented the Canadian case with great vigor and enthusiasm, though Merritt C. Page, district attorney and chief prosecutor, appeared extremely reluctant to defy the public agitation swirling about the court.

To defend the prisoners, Joseph K. Toole directed a formidable battery of lawyers from the firms of Johnson and Toole, Shober and Lowry, and Chumasero and Lowry. Though Canadian officials appear not to have known, this selection of lawyers revealed the political implications of the extradition case, for Sanders spoke for a Republican group bitterly opposed to the Irish Democrats of Joseph K. Toole.

Canadian officers applauded Sanders' vigor and courage when he denounced the Benton men as "Belly river wolfers, outlaws, smugglers, cut-throats, horse-thieves and squaw-men." They gave no indication, if indeed they ever knew, that much of this was inspired by the political motive of discrediting the strong Irish Democrats of Fort Benton. Sanders' attack was so violent that five years later in the general elections of 1880, the Benton Democrats were still popularly called the "Belly river wolfers" and the "Whoop-Up Democrats." They never forgave Sanders for his role in the Helena trial and the whip-lash of his tongue remained a bitter memory for many years.

Evidence presented in the hearings proved contradictory and inconclusive. Abel Farwell, chief witness for the prosecution, told a confused story. Evidence from fellow traders implicated Farwell in the nasty business of whiskey trading and weakened his testimony by challenging his character. Commissioner Cullen discharged the prisoners on the ground that the Canadian government had not presented sufficient proof of an assault with intent to commit murder. "It is difficult to believe," said Cullen, "that an impartial jury, whether in the

United States or Dominion of Canada, would find these defendants guilty upon this testimony of either offenses charged against them . . ." ²³ Two years later, this judgment was sustained when a Winnipeg jury freed three of the Benton men under similar conditions.

Jubilant crowds greeted the news of Cullen's decision. A torch-light parade through Helena's main streets expressed their enthusiasm, and liquor flowed freely as Montanans celebrated the return to freedom of their wolfer heroes.

With shocking suddenness the Helena trial reached an unexpected climax when local officers arrested Col. James F. Macleod. This farcical turn of events came as a result of Jeff Devereaux's charge of false arrest against the Canadian officer. Chief Justice D. S. Wade speedily dismissed the charge, for Macleod had acted "strictly under orders of his own government and with the approval of the government of the United States." ²⁴

Helena's celebration seemed tame and colorless in contrast to the hysterical welcome Fort Benton lavished upon its returning heroes. "With flags flying, band playing and horses prancing," the little frontier town devoted an entire day to greeting its ex-prisoners.

That evening, a mass meeting gathered in Solomon's hall to express its enthusiastic pleasure. A carefully selected civic committee staged the event in a hall "tastefully decorated" with a large American flag on which appeared the fighting slogans, "Home Once More," and "Didn't Extradite." Beneath Old Glory a crayon drawing of the British lion in full retreat with an American eagle twisting his tail, completed the patriotic motif.

After a few preliminary formalities, "Col." J. J. Donnelly harangued the audience with an impassioned speech filled with bitterness and venom. The happy purpose of greeting Fort Benton's returning citizens quickly disappeared in a welter of denunciations, particularly

against the federal and Canadian authorities arranging the arrests. "But for the official clothed in a little brief authority, who would thus trample upon the rights of American citizens for the gratification of a Canadian policeman," roared the enraged Fenian, "I have no language sufficiently strong to express my contempt."²⁵

Feeling ran high in the river town for many months.irate citizens treated Farwell with "silent contempt" as an informer and a "hired witness." On at least one occasion, the unhappy trader received a letter threatening physical violence. Soon he moved north of the border where employment with the Canadian government relieved much of the tension and stigma of life in Fort Benton. John Evans, on the other hand, quickly capitalized on his unexpected popularity. With a keen eye for business opportunity, the "Chief" opened his own establishment in Fort Benton, the "Extradition Saloon."

Fort Benton's enthusiasm quickly turned to dismay as news reached the town that three more of the Cypress Hills participants faced trial in Canada. There, the Mounted Police arrested Philander Vogle, George M. Bell, and James Hughes for the "wanton and atrocious slaughter of peaceable and inoffensive people." Dismay became rage as the details of the arrest and transfer of the men to Winnipeg for trial reached Fort Benton from the north.

At once, the *Fort Benton Record* seized upon the arrests to launch a new crusade. Without restraint the editor poured out his wrath upon the Canadian government for its "secret hearings" which quietly arrested the men and hustled them off to Fort Garry, "away from their witnesses and all intercourse with their friends." This treatment, he charged, was a "modern star chamber" and an insult to the American people who were told by the Canadians that "the evidence upon which a conscientious American juror refused to commit, was more than

sufficient to convict an American in Canada."²⁶

Happily, the atmosphere in Winnipeg argued for a judicial treatment of the evidence. Far removed from the excitements and tensions of the frontier, the Queen's court administered justice without the prejudicial pressure of public clamor. On October 13, 1875, with Chief Justice C. J. Wood presiding, the court presented bills of indictment against the prisoners and committed them to trial.

In Winnipeg, however, the Fort Benton men faced a discouraging situation. Over a thousand miles from their homes and without a penny to finance their defense, they turned to James Wickes Taylor, the American consul, for advice. Taylor's attitude, though formally correct and officially helpful, did little to encourage them to hope for strong support from that quarter. Soon they sought aid from their distant friends in Montana. Through published pleas and in private correspondence they told of their plight and implored financial assistance.

Wisely, they directed most of their pleas to John Evans. Nor did the Benton saloon-keeper disappoint them. He wrote assurances that their old friends would assist and, good as his word, soon collected nearly four hundred dollars for the defense. Since the lawyer's fees alone promised to exceed five hundred dollars, this was far from adequate, but the resourceful Evans promised that further aid was on the way.

Behind the scenes, moreover, events conspired to assist the prisoners. Taylor, whose first reaction was one of cool formality, now became convinced that the men actually had a strong case which justice demanded must be presented as effectively as possible. The Benton men could hardly have found a more able or influential advocate. Judicial in tem-

²⁵ *Helena Weekly Herald*, July 29, 1875.

²⁶ Quoted in Turner, *Northwest Mounted Police* I:35. See also James T. Stanford's eye-witness account in *Hill County Democrat* (Havre) August 20, 1926.

²⁷ *Fort Benton Record*, August 7, 1875.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Sept. 4, 11, and Nov. 13, 1875.

perament, scholarly in tastes, and universally respected throughout Canada, Taylor was in a splendid position to organize their defense.

To argue their case, the American consul immediately secured the services of S. C. Biggs, an able and prominent Winnipeg barrister. Then he turned his immense energies to unearthing every scrap of evidence for his superiors in Washington. From these investigations, Taylor soon decided that the "massacre" was in reality a "frontier fight" in which the Indians, as well as the whites, shared the guilt. "It ought not be called a massacre," concluded the consul. Moreover, he became increasingly alarmed that "serious international complications" would arise from the trial.²⁷

In Washington, State Department officials shared Taylor's concern. Both in Winnipeg and Washington, the chief worry centered around the lack of witnesses for the defense. Though the department "made every effort to relieve the prisoners by application through the British Minister," it quickly realized that the key to their defense rested with the eye-witnesses in Fort Benton. Unfortunately, these witnesses were also under indictment for the same crime and refused to testify in Winnipeg unless granted assurances of "safe conduct" and immunity from arrest while in Canada. These the Canadian government, for obvious reasons, could not grant.²⁸

Taylor despaired of organizing a defense without these vital witnesses. The State Department strongly supported the Winnipeg consul, arguing to the British government that a fair trial for these American citizens was an impossibility without them.²⁹ Through the representations of the department and the arguments of Taylor, the Chief Justice postponed the trial until the following June while their efforts continued to secure evidence for the defense. Ungraciously and quite falsely, the *Fort Benton Record* greeted the news of the postponement as another proof of British injus-

tice in which the men were to be held in prison yet another year before coming to trial.

Taylor's worries grew as he sought vainly to prepare a defense. In desperation, he hit upon the idea of a commission appointed by the Canadian government to secure depositions from the absent witnesses. His hopes soared when J. H. Cameron introduced a bill into the Canadian House of Commons permitting such a commission to examine witnesses and present their evidence in criminal cases. The Cameron bill had its first reading on February 23rd, and its second reading on March 23rd; then it was referred to the committee on private bills where it quietly died.

To add to the consul's concern, he now feared that the Canadian government demanded a conviction because its Indian policy in the West required a token punishment to impress its Indian wards. "I am full of apprehension," he wrote Washington, "The authorities propose holding a treaty with the Indians in the vicinity of Cypress Hills this summer and hope for a favorable result of their negotiations, if the prisoners are condemned to death. . . Their danger is that they may be sacrificed from considerations of government policy."³⁰

By early June, Taylor confessed to Hamilton Fish by telegram that he despaired, "waiting from day to day for a favorable turn of events." This shift in fortune came in a most unexpected fashion when James McKay, a prominent Scotch half-breed and a member of the provincial government, volunteered to assist the defense. Moreover, when the case came to trial, McKay testified that he knew Little Soldier and his band of Assiniboines as "Indians who would rob, pillage and murder if they had the opportunity."³¹

When the trial convened on June 20, 1876, Taylor's hopes had considerably revived. Within three days these hopes were fully justified by a dramatic turn of events which undermined the Crown

case and led to the acquittal of the prisoners.

Along with Farwell, the government brought eight witnesses to the trial, four Metis and four Indians. These witnesses, everyone believed, were brought to support Farwell's testimony. Before their appearance, however, they visited a priest who severely cautioned them to tell the truth under their sacred oath. The surprising result of these interviews was that only one Metis and one Indian testified for the prosecution while three of the witnesses, though brought to Winnipeg at great government expense, testified for the defense.

On June 23rd, Taylor happily telegraphed Washington, "Bell, Hughes and Vogle acquitted . . . Testimony of informer Farwell not fully supported by other witnesses for prosecution. Please inform Governor of Montana."³²

Chief Justice Wood concluded the trial with a charge to the jury which comprised the most thoughtful and accurate summary of the Cypress Hills affair. While there was no evidence that the men had participated in murder, said the judge, there was no justification for the fight in the conduct of the Indians. Whiskey was the real culprit and this fight was another of its fearful effects upon the western Indians.

Though the Chief Justice did not emphasize it, far more than the guilt or innocence of three individual frontiersmen was on trial in the Winnipeg court. Under indictment was a frontier society which tolerated the sale of whiskey to the Indians and encouraged violence against them when disagreements arose.

James Wickes Taylor suggested other interesting aspects of the affair in his analysis for State Department officials. He was convinced by the evidence that T. C. Power had imposed upon the Canadian government and that their employee, Abel Farwell, was the "instrument of the scheme which proved entirely successful . . . His testimony in the extradition proceedings at Helena

was impeached and I have no doubt that he perjured himself."³³

As important as the trial itself was its aftermath. The tradition quickly developed in the Canadian West that the men received "very strict sentences."³⁴ Thus the police won the esteem and friendship of the Indians who were convinced that the Queen's justice fell equally upon the red and white. Curiously, not only is this carefully nourished tradition of severe punishment false, but the men actually considered demanding indemnities from the Canadian government for their long incarcerations and to pay their heavy travel and trial costs.

Not until 1882, however, did the Cypress Hills case reach its legal end. In March of that year, the Canadian government dismissed the indictments against all the Fort Benton wolfers. "It seems a long time to have waited," Taylor wrote Evans, "but I have had to overcome a great amount of prejudice in this case, but 'alls well that ends well'."³⁵

In any event, few incidents in the colorful history of the Whoop-Up country touched as many basic problems as the Cypress Hills affair. And no incident in the long history of Canadian-American occupation of the North American frontier demonstrates more clearly the fundamental differences between the two neighbors in their conquest of the Great Plains.

³² Taylor to William Pound, March 20, 1876; Taylor to N. P. Langford, Feb. 28, 1876 in Taylor Letterbooks, St. Paul. N. P. Langford to Martin Maginnis, March 11, 1876 in Maginnis Papers, Helena.

³³ "Report of a Committee of the Privy Council," approved by the Governor General of Canada, December 17, 1875.

³⁴ Consular Dispatch 239, State Department to Taylor, April 25, 1876. "The trial should not take place without giving the prisoners the benefit of the testimony which is ready to be produced."

³⁵ Consular Dispatch 239, Taylor to State Department, June 8, 1876.

³⁶ Taylor to McKay, May 23, 1876 in Taylor Letterbooks; *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 24, 1876.

³⁷ Telegram in Dispatch 241, Taylor to Cadwalader, August 1, 1876.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ J. W. Horan, *West No'West, A History of Alberta*, 24.

⁴⁰ Taylor to J. H. Evans, March 20, 1882 in Taylor Letterbooks.

By Don Douma

The History of Oil in Montana



In Part I, in the Autumn 1953 issue, Don Douma traced the pre-commercial phase of Montana's crude oil industry from the discovery, by an immigrant wagon train party, of oil scum on a pool of water near the Bozeman Trail crossing of the Big Horn River in 1864, through early exploratory drillings to 1919. Then followed the pioneering phase of crude oil production, distribution and refineries—a period of great expectations—until the national stock market crash of 1929 brought forebodings of disaster. Part I ends with a listing the major oil discoveries through 1930. Parts III and IV will follow in the Spring and Summer issues.

PART II. CRUDE OIL INDUSTRY DURING THE DEPRESSION YEARS 1931-1939

The preceding period had been a real prosperity decade for Montana's crude oil industry. The decade of the 1920's had witnessed the birth of the crude oil industry in this state, as it brought the discovery and development of Montana's four leading oil fields. Furthermore, some six smaller fields had been added to the series of discoveries taking place during the 1920's. Two figures on annual crude oil production express most clearly the rapid development of the oil industry in this state during the 1920's. The total value of the annual output of Montana's oil fields increased from the relatively insignificant total of \$184,500 during 1919¹ to the more impressive total of \$5,420,000 during 1930.²

However, the oil industry was not spared the effects of the depression in the economic life of the country. Gradually the lower prices of refined products in the national market made themselves felt in Montana's oil fields in the form of lower prices paid for crude, most of all in the Kevin-Sunburst field. The higher gravity crude of the rapidly developing Cut Bank field was making deep inroads into the Kevin-Sunburst market, secur-

ing refinery demand formerly supplied by Kevin-Sunburst operators. This fact, combined with the declining crude prices, discouraged new drilling activities in the Kevin-Sunburst field. In 1932 drilling activities here reached the lowest point since the discovery of the field.³ The total physical production of the Kevin-Sunburst field declined from 1,910,893 barrels in 1930 to 1,185,935 barrels in 1933, or by almost thirty-eight per cent.⁴ Lack of new drilling marked Montana's crude oil industry, as a whole, during the first part of the 1930's; though in less degree than was true for the Kevin-Sunburst field. From 1930 to 1933 the total physical production of all oil fields within the state declined from 3,349,000 barrels in 1930 to 2,273,000 barrels in 1933, a drop of more than thirty-two per cent.⁵ This decline in Montana's oil output was due mainly to the lack of new drilling which normally makes up for the natural decline in the output of producing wells.⁶

The young Cut Bank field proved a remarkable exception to the general decline in the production of Montana's oil fields. Here drilling activity increased, as more and more operators entered the field; and all completed wildcats proved to be producers. The reputation that no dry hole could be drilled in the Cut Bank field formed a potent factor in its development during the first part of the

Some day the history of Montana oil will be written in minute detail, probably requiring several volumes. As a preliminary survey, however, in a field not previously researched, the young Netherlander, Don Douma, who produced this work in 1952 as a Master's thesis in economics at Montana State University, has furnished an auspicious beginning. Douma lives at Billings but travels the entire state as an investment counselor for the C.I.T. Corp.

1930's. While the annual production of the Kevin-Sunburst field declined, the output of the Cut Bank field increased rapidly. From 1932 to 1937 Cut Bank's annual physical production increased from 20,639 barrels in 1932 to 3,368,234 barrels in 1937.⁷ From 1935 on, Cut Bank ranked first among the Montana oil fields.

The Cut Bank oil field owed its rapid development in large degree to the major companies which secured considerable acreage soon after R. C. Tarrant's well had called attention to the Cut Bank area.⁸ The annual physical output of the Cut Bank field made rapid progress when these "majors" invested several million dollars in the development of their leases. The largest holder of acreage, by 1934, was the Montana Power Gas Company with a block of two hundred square miles in the gas-producing northeastern part of the field.⁹ "This is, according to oil men, the largest block of acreage ever leased to any one oil or gas company in the United States."¹⁰ Second largest producer in the Cut Bank field was the Texas Company, with more than sixty thousand acres under lease secured before any other major company entered. The Texas Company's interest in the new oil field was due partly to the presence of the International Refining Company's (subsidiary of The Texas Company) plant at Sunburst. The short distance from the Cut Bank field to its Sunburst refinery made it possible for The Texas Company to supply it partly with the high quality crude from Cut Bank.¹¹

In the meantime a new refinery had been added to Montana's refining industry. Organized by W. M. Fulton and W. E. Rice, the Home Oil and Refining Company had built a modern 1,200 barrel plant at Great Falls during 1931 and 1932.¹² It soon became clear that W. E. Rice, vice-president of the Company, would become one of the leading refiners in this state, when in the spring of 1933 he organized and became president of the Independent Refining Company and purchased the property of the Laurel Oil and Refining Company at Laurel. Two years

later Rice increased his properties again, when he purchased the stock held by Stanolind (subsidiary of Standard Oil of Indiana) and by the Ohio Oil Company in the Pondera Pipeline Company.¹³ This transaction put Rice in complete control of the pipeline to use it solely for the transport of crude oil from the Fulton-Rice properties in the Pondera field, Montana's third oil field at that time, to their refinery at Great Falls.¹⁴

In spite of the lack of new drilling, the 1934 production of Kevin-Sunburst showed an increase of more than 400,000 barrels over its 1933 output.¹⁵ The increase was due to the introduction of a new technique, the treatment of dry holes and slowly producing wells with hydrochloric acid.¹⁶ When poured into a well producing from a limestone formation, the acid opened new oil containing cava-

⁷ Montana Oil Conservation Board, *Statements of Crude Oil Produced*, May 20, 1950.

⁸ See Table I.

⁹ *Great Falls Daily Leader*, Montana Oil and Industry Edition, February 25, 1933.

¹⁰ Montana Oil Conservation Board, *op. cit.*, May 20, 1950.

¹¹ Roy J. W. Ely, *Montana's Production, 1930-1949*, p. 50.

¹² *Great Falls Daily Leader*, *op. cit.*, Feb. 25, 1933.

¹³ Montana Oil Conservation Board, *op. cit.*, May 29, 1950.

¹⁴ *Great Falls Daily Leader*, February 28, 1934. These companies were: The Texas Company, Montana Power Gas Company, Ohio Oil Company and Continental Oil Company.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ The International Refining Company had so far obtained its crude from the Kevin-Sunburst field. This was from The Texas Company's own wells here, with the balance purchased from independent operators.

¹⁷ *Great Falls Daily Leader*, *op. cit.*, February 25, 1933.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, February 28, 1934.

¹⁹ *Montana Oil and Mining Journal* March 30, 1935: Pondera Pipeline Company was organized originally by Fulton, Rice and the Ohio Oil Company for the construction of a pipeline from the Pondera field to Conrad, on the Great Northern railroad. Later on, Stanolind came in.

²⁰ Pondera properties operated by the Fulton Petroleum Corporation, originally organized for the development of the Fulton-Rice pool in Kevin-Sunburst.

²¹ Montana Oil Conservation Board, *op. cit.*, May 20, 1950.

²² *Great Falls Daily Leader*, *op. cit.*, February 28, 1934. The application of hydrochloric acid had long been used by geologists to detect the presence of lime in drill cuttings. A Michigan oil operator got the idea to apply the acid to oil wells producing from the lime. After the practice had proved very successful elsewhere, it was introduced to the Kevin-Sunburst field by W. E. Rice in 1933.

ties by eating its way through the lime. The "shots" of acid proved to be of utmost significance to Montana's oil industry and brought new life to Kevin-Sunburst, as many of its wells were drilled into the limestone. The average Kevin-Sunburst well showed a twenty per cent increase in production, after it had been treated with acid.¹⁷ In Pondera the 1934 output increased by almost ten thousand barrels over its 1933 production, due to the use of acid. New drilling had almost come to a complete standstill here during the first part of the 1930's.¹⁸

The main problem confronting Montana's oil industry during the latter part of the 1930's was the difficulty in finding a market for the crude produced from the fields of northern Montana, especially from the Kevin-Sunburst and Pondera fields. During the season the high quality crude from the Cut Bank field usually succeeded in finding a market in Canadian refineries. Because of the uncertainty of finding a market new development of the fields was curbed and existing wells were forced to produce considerably below capacity. This is expressed in the figures on the physical production of Cut Bank and Kevin-Sunburst, for the years 1936 through 1939, which show only slight variations from year to year. After a rapid annual increase in production the Cut Bank field produced 3,334,847 barrels in 1936; during 1939 the field produced 3,541,679 barrels. Kevin-Sunburst's output during 1936 amounted to 1,537,795 barrels; in 1939 its total physical production had risen to 1,548,086 barrels.¹⁹ The relatively small increase in the annual production of Montana's leading oil fields during these years was due mainly to lack of stimulus for new developments, caused by insufficient demand for crude by the Montana refineries.

To analyze the contemporary refinery situation in Montana, all refining plants operating in this state on January 1, 1935, have been listed in Table II. This date

has been chosen because it is about in the middle of the decade and forms the beginning of the period when marketing troubles became more and more serious. From Table II it can be seen that the daily refining capacity, available to the oil fields of northern Montana on January 1, 1935, amounted to 7,800 barrels.²⁰ The overage total daily crude oil output of the northern Montana fields amounted to 13,759 barrels, of which Cut Bank produced 7,747 barrels, Kevin-Sunburst 4,581 barrels and Pondera 1,431 barrels.²¹

Of the average daily production of 13,759 barrels, northern Montana refineries were thus able to handle only 7,800, which left about 6,000 barrels without a market, every day. Other parts of the state, however, had a considerable surplus of refining capacity. Southern Montana had on January 1, 1935, a total daily refining capacity of 7,070 barrels,²² of which the oil fields of this part of the state claimed on the average 172 barrels daily,²³ leaving a surplus capacity of about 6,900 barrels daily. Most of the crude processed by the refineries of southern Montana was imported from oil fields in northern Wyoming.

From the data given here, it can be concluded that northern Montana's marketing problems were not caused by insufficient refining capacity available to the crude oil producers in this state. Instead, the marketing difficulties in northern Montana's oil fields were due basically

¹⁷ *Ibid.*,

¹⁸ Montana Oil Conservation Board, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Montana Oil and Mining Journal*, October 26, 1935.

This was composed of Big West Oil Company at Kevin, 800 barrels; Conrad Refining Company at Conrad, 1,000 barrels; Home Oil and Refining Company at Great Falls, 1,000 barrels; and the International Refining Company at Sunburst, 5,000 barrels of daily refining capacity.

²¹ *Ibid.*, November 30, 1935.

²² *Ibid.*, October 26, 1935. This was composed of the daily refining capacities: Big Horn Oil and Refining Company at Billings, 1,000 barrels; Independent Refining Company at Laurel, 3,000 barrels; The Russell Oil Company at Billings, 1,000 barrels; Yale Oil Company at Billings, 2,000 barrels; and the Red Lodge Refinery, 70 barrels.

²³ *Ibid.*, November 30, 1935. This was composed of the daily production of Elk and Lake Basin, 88 barrels, and Soap Creek, 84 barrels.

ly to a faulty geographic distribution of refining capacity in this state. High cost of transportation made it impossible to ship the surplus crude from the oil fields in the north to Billings and Laurel, where large refineries ran mainly on crude purchased in the nearby oil fields of northern Wyoming. Lower rail rates between the oil fields in the northern part of the state and the refineries in the southern part would be a way to restore the maladjustments in Montana's oil industry. The existing freight rates in Montana made things worse, however, as they were considered to be the highest in the nation by the middle of the 1930's.²⁴ Because of Montana's location between lower rate structures on the east and the west, the railroads were able to maintain short haul interstate rates, which were higher than many long haul rates into the state. Under this situation, northern Montana crude oil producers had to look for a market elsewhere or construct additional refining capacity in the northern part of the state. As long as Canadian refiners (Imperial Oil Company and British American Oil Company) provided a market for northern Montana's surplus crude, no serious difficulties appeared. The greater part of the crude oil exports to Canada was purchased in the Cut Bank field by the Imperial Oil Company for its refining plants at Regina (daily capacity 3,500 barrels) and Calgary. The importance of the Canadian market to northern Montana's crude oil producers at that time is evident from the fact that the Canadian refiners purchased, during 1934, on the average eight thousand barrels of Montana crude daily,²⁵ and by the middle of 1935 the Imperial Oil Company was purchasing seventy-five per cent of the total Cut Bank production for its refinery at Regina.²⁶ Purchases usually started in April and continued until the end of the year, when they were stopped or curtailed as need required. Difficulties came when a large crude oil field, Turner Valley, was discovered in Canada during 1936,

and the Imperial Oil Company as well as the British American Oil Company, started the curtailment of their crude oil purchases in northern Montana.²⁷ Imperial Oil Company stopped its purchases in Montana entirely on October 1, 1937,²⁸ leaving all to the British American, which still purchased restricted amounts of Montana crude for its refining plant at Coutts (opposite Sweetgrass, Montana, on the international border). Because of the much higher cost of transportation on Turner Valley crude, the Coutts refinery worked entirely with Montana crude. When it was shut down in October 1937, the purchases by Canadian refiners stopped entirely.²⁹ Montana petroleum engineers believed that the Canadian market was definitely lost for northern Montana, as the Turner Valley had by that time already a daily potential of between 20,000 and 50,000 barrels. Their opinion is expressed in the following quotation:³⁰

Turner Valley oil field will be able to care for the Canadian crude market for many years to come—certainly for five years and probably for many more. To all intents and purposes, Montana crude is out of the Canadian market for all time.

The loss of the Canadian market caused overproduction of crude oil in northern Montana. Large quantities of crude had to be stored for lack of a market, and producing wells were curtailed considerably. Surveys held at the end of 1937 showed that the Cut Bank, Kevin-Sunburst and Pondera fields had no market for fifty per cent of their production.³¹ Temporary relief came when the Great Northern Railroad lowered its rate on crude oil from twenty-three cents to

²⁴ *Montana Oil and Mining Journal*, May 2, 1936. This information taken from an article giving the views of B. C. Stone, traffic expert of Denver (Colorado) on this matter.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, June 15, 1935.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, June 8, 1935.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, July 11, 1936.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, September 25, 1937.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, October 30, 1937.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, December 18, 1937.

³¹ *Ibid.*, December 18, 1937.

seventeen cents per one hundred pounds for hauls from Cut Bank to Billings, effective April 1, 1938.³² The only permanent solution to the problem, however, appeared to be the construction of additional refining capacity in northern Montana.

From January 1, 1935, to the time when the Canadian refiners left northern Montana, some 2,700 barrels of daily refining capacity were added to the refining industry of this part of the state. During 1935 many rumors had been heard in Montana oil circles about new refineries to be constructed by certain companies. It was expected that Continental Oil Company was planning to build a modern refining plant in the southern part of the state, and persistent rumors were that the Home Oil and Refining Company of Great Falls would be sold to Standard Oil of California.³³ Nothing happened, however, till new rumors appeared about plans for the construction of a refinery at Shelby, to care for the surplus of three thousand barrels per day in the Kevin-Sunburst field.³⁴ It would take another six months before the first addition to northern Montana's refining capacity was actually made, when the Big West Oil Company expanded the daily capacity of its Kevin plant from 800 to 1,000 barrels.³⁵ A few months later, August 1936, L. B. O'Neil,³⁶ president of the Santa Rita Oil and Gas Company, announced that his company would build a modern 2,500 barrel refinery at Cut Bank, primarily to handle the company's increasing crude production from the Cut Bank field.³⁷ The new refinery, operating under the name of Northwestern Refining Company, started its production in March 1937.³⁸ Shortly after the retreat of the Canadians from the Montana crude market in October 1937, the construction of additional refining capacity for northern Montana really started. The following December, 1937, Yale Oil and Refining Company of Billings announced its plans for the construction of a 1,500 barrel refinery at Kalispell.

Several five-year contracts with Cut Bank producers, for the purchase of the crude, had been made already, securing the plant's future crude supply.³⁹ Yale Oil and Refining Company's announcement was soon followed by more news, when, in January 1938, it became known that the Wasatch Oil and Refining Company of Salt Lake City was planning to build a modern cracking plant at Pocatello, Idaho.⁴⁰ It was expected that the two new refineries would give a steady market for a daily Cut Bank crude production of 1,000 to 1,500 barrels.

That the Wasatch Oil and Refining Company would become an important buyer of northern Montana crude oil became clear when it announced plans to construct another modern refinery at Spokane. The crude for the 2,200 barrel Spokane plant would be furnished by the Glacier Production Company (subsidiary of Montana Power Company), which had no market for a daily production of about two thousand barrels of crude from the Cut Bank field, since the Canadian refiners had stopped their purchases. In order to secure a market for its crude in the future, the Glacier Production Company made a large investment in the Spokane refinery.⁴¹ The Inland Empire Refinery, under which the new plant at Spokane operated, was put into production in the spring of 1939.⁴²

To enable the transport of crude from the Cut Bank field to Spokane, the Great

³² *Ibid.*, December 11, 1937.

³³ *Ibid.*, July 13, 1935.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, November 9, 1935.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, June 13, 1936.

³⁶ L. B. O'Neil was a prominent figure in the Montana oil industry. As one of the pioneers in the Cat Creek field, he took part in the organization of the Lewistown Oil and Refining Company; later on he sold his interests to Continental Oil Company. Soon after its discovery O'Neil entered the Kevin-Sunburst field. Here he built, for the Santa Rita Oil and Gas Company, the first refinery in northern Montana, the present International Refining Company plant at Sunburst. Santa Rita sold the plant to The Texas Company.

³⁷ *Montana Oil and Mining Journal*, August 22, 1936.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, March 20, 1937.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, December 18, 1937.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, January 8, 1938.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, March 19, 1938.

⁴² *Ibid.*, December 24, 1938.

TABLE I.
VALUE OF PRODUCTION OF COPPER, CRUDE OIL
AND ZINC IN MONTANA, SELECTED YEARS,
1930-1949.

Years Covered	Value of Copper Production	Value of Crude Oil Production	Value of Zinc Production
1930	\$25,504,378	\$ 5,420,000	\$ 2,536,373
1931	16,794,572	2,730,000	512,809
1932	5,345,383	2,560,000	131,791
1933	4,190,488	2,220,000	1,740,854
1934	5,061,200	4,380,000	2,642,017
1935	12,861,470	6,150,000	4,820,705
1936	20,156,096	7,700,000	4,971,700
1937	34,975,776	7,300,000	5,091,840
1938	15,133,748	5,190,000	849,024
1939	20,348,016	5,860,000	3,618,096
1940	28,564,366	6,660,000	6,625,962
1941	30,216,496	8,000,000	9,106,500
1942	34,168,948	8,950,000	10,176,990
1943	34,976,500	9,500,000	8,122,896
1944	31,911,300	10,700,000	8,236,956
1945	23,896,620	10,810,000	4,002,690
1946	18,947,844	12,710,844	4,091,880
1947	24,318,000	16,701,000	11,054,270
1948	25,281,368	23,989,343*	15,719,270
1949	22,304,734	23,894,640*	13,440,360

Source: Roy J. W. Ely, *Montana Production, 1930-1949*, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Montana State University, December, 1950, Missoula, Montana.

*Oil Conservation Board of the State of Montana, *Statement of Crude Oil Produced and Valuation of All Montana Fields*, Great Falls, Montana, 1950.

Northern Railroad lowered its rate from 27.5 cents per 100 pounds of crude to 20 cents per 100 pounds. Upon protest of California oil and trucking interests, fearing to lose their market in the Spokane area to northern Montana, the Interstate Commerce Commission suspended the new rate. After much uncertainty the issue was finally settled in October 1939, when the Interstate Commerce Commission established the rate at 22 cents per 100 pounds.⁴³ The lower rail rate on crude, together with a lower rate on gasoline⁴⁴ was of great importance for Montana's oil producers, as it opened the large market of Idaho and eastern Washington. After the establishment of the new rail rates it was possible for the Montana oil industry to compete successfully

with the Californians in the Midland Empire area.

In the meantime, arrangements had been made for the construction of another refinery, this time in northern Montana. In March 1939, an agreement had been reached between the Glacier Production Company, the Producers Refining Company⁴⁵ and the Socony Vacuum Company, to construct a modern

⁴³ *Ibid.*, October 7, 1938.

⁴⁴ The rate on gasoline was lowered from 50 cents to 33.5 cents per 100 pounds in the same ruling of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

⁴⁵ *Montana Oil and Mining Journal*, April 2, 1938. Several independent producers of the northern Montana oil fields had formed the Producers Refining Company in March 1938, with the purpose of building a refinery in Shelby to provide a market for operators who were still without. All oil operators in the Cut Bank, Kevin-Sunburst and Pondera fields could subscribe to the enterprise.

3,500 barrel refinery at Cut Bank in a joint enterprise. According to the agreement the Glacier Production Company would build the refining plant,⁴⁶ the Producers Refining Company guaranteed a continuous crude supply of at least 1,500 barrels daily, while the Socony Vacuum Oil Company would make its vast distributing system available to the new refinery. The Glacier Production Company—Socony Vacuum Oil Company plant was put into operation the following September.⁴⁷

The construction of considerable additional refining capacity during 1938 and 1939 greatly improved the outlook for Montana's oil industry. New activity followed, especially in the northern Montana oil fields. The results could be seen in figures on the total physical production of Montana's oil fields; in 1939 they produced 5,960,000 barrels of crude oil, surpassing the 1938 output of 4,946,000 barrels by considerably more than one million barrels.⁴⁸ The improvements in the refinery situation in Montana justified the further development of its oil fields.

The serious marketing difficulties prevailing in the oil fields of northern Montana during the greater part of the 1930's had not been felt in the Cut Bank field until October 1, 1937, when the Imperial Oil Company, largest buyer in the Cut Bank field, withdrew from the crude oil market of northern Montana.⁴⁹ After losing its Canadian market, the total crude oil output of the Cut Bank field dropped from 3,368,234 barrels in 1937 to 2,833,146 in 1938, or by more than fifteen per cent.⁵⁰ Before that, the high quality crude produced by Montana's youngest oil field had found a ready market. This is one of the factors accounting for Cut Bank's rapidly increasing production up until 1937. Remarkable advances in the field's output were made during 1935 and 1936, when an active drilling campaign brought the discovery of new oil pools and opened up a few big wells. During the summer of

1935 wildcatters had discovered a new oil pool in the extreme south of the Cut Bank field, south of the town of Cut Bank. This part of the field, which became known as the Valier area, drew much attention at that time, as it was expected that the main crude oil pool of the Cut Bank field would be found here. Attention had been drawn to this part of the field when The Texas Company and the Montana Power Gas Company each completed a wildcat showing a considerably higher daily production than the average Cut Bank well.⁵¹ Expectations seemed to be confirmed when A. B. Cobb⁵² completed a well in the southern Cut Bank field, producing five hundred barrels of crude during the first twenty-four hours. The completion of the Cobb-Young No. 1⁵³ started a scramble for leases on the acreage adjacent to the big well, of which 2,900 acres were taken out on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, yielding an initial amount of \$36,000 to be divided among the members of the tribe.⁵⁴ These new leases would bring considerable development to the south Cut Bank field, as the contracts required the drilling of fifty wells during 1936, estimated to involve an investment of one million dollars.

At the same time, much drilling activity took place in other parts of the Cut Bank field, adding more acreage to its proven area. Much excitement was aroused when the Santa Rita Oil and

⁴⁶ Glacier Production Company had been planning to build a 1,500 barrel refinery at Cut Bank, and had a laboratory and storage facilities for 80,000 barrels there.

⁴⁷ *Montana Oil and Mining Journal*, September 23, 1939.

⁴⁸ Roy J. W. Ely, *Montana's Production, 1930-1949*, p. 50.

⁴⁹ See footnote 28.

⁵⁰ Montana Oil Conservation Board, *op. cit.*

⁵¹ *Montana Oil and Mining Journal*, June 22, 1935.

⁵² *Ibid.*, August 3, 1935. A. B. Cobb came to Montana as a contractor in the fall of 1933 from Wyoming. Soon he took out leases for himself, and his success started with the completion of the Cobb-Young No. 1. A few years later Cobb became one of the leading persons in the Montana oil industry.

⁵³ Young was the owner of the land on which the well was located. He had won the land in a poker game twelve years previously.

⁵⁴ *Montana Oil and Mining Journal*, September 28, 1935.

Gas Company brought in the largest well so far completed in the Cut Bank field in January, 1936. The Santa Rita-Lander No. 1, a gusher producing 1,400 barrels of crude per day, was completed on the Lander farm in the northwest sector of the Cut Bank field.⁵⁵ As the sensational Lander No. 1 gusher continued to produce at its original rate during 1936, the crude supply of the Santa Rita Oil and Gas Company in Cut Bank increased sharply. In order to secure a permanent market for its crude, the Company decided a few months later to construct its own refinery at Cut Bank.⁵⁶

While new oil producing acreage was added to the Cut Bank field, a new crude oil discovery had been made in the Sweetgrass Hills, Liberty county, by the J. H. Hamilton Company.⁵⁷ The Hamilton Company wildcat was drilled on the Flat Coulee structure, just north of the Bear's Den structure, where oil had been discovered in 1929.⁵⁸ Com-

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, February 1, 1936.

⁵⁶ See previous references to stoppage of Canadian purchases.

⁵⁷ *Montana Oil and Mining Journal*, June 8, 1935.

⁵⁸ *Great Falls Leader*, March 28, 1930.

TABLE II.
OPERATING MONTANA REFINERIES, THEIR CAPACITY
AND LOCATION ON JANUARY 1, 1935

<i>Company</i>		<i>Daily Capacity</i> (in barrels)	<i>Location</i> <i>Part of</i> <i>the State</i>
Arro Oil and Refining Co.....	1500	Lewistown	central
B. and M. Refining Co.....	300	Roundup	central
Bears Den Refinery.....	25	Bears Den	
Big Horn Oil and Refining Co....	1000	Billings	south
Big West Oil Company.....	800	Kevin	north
Conrad Refining Company*.....	1000	Conrad	north
Consumers Refining Co.....	500	Collins	
Continental Oil Company.....	1500	Lewistown	central
Dunlap Refining Company.....	75	Cat Creek	central
Hart Refineries	100	Hedgesville	
Hart Refineries	300	Missoula	west
Home Oil and Refining Co.....	1000	Great Falls	north
Eugene Hunt	200	Winnett	
Independent Refining Co.....	3000	Laurel	south
International Refining Co.....	5000	Sunburst	north
Red Lodge Refinery.....	70	Red Lodge	south
The Russell Oil Company.....	1000	Billings	south
Unity Petroleum Corp.....	800	Kalispell	west
Yale Oil Company of South Dakota	2000	Billings	south
Yale Oil Company of South Dakota	500	Butte	southwest
TOTAL	20,670		

* Conrad Refining Company plant at Conrad not in operation on January 1, 1935 because of bankruptcy. In August of the same year the Conrad Refining Company plant taken in lease by W. E. Rice and put into operation again. Rice purchased

the Conrad plant at a bankruptcy sale for \$16,500 in June, 1936. (*Montana Oil and Mining Journal*, June 20, 1936.)

Journal, October 26, 1935, p. 5.

pleted in June 1935, the Hamilton well⁵⁹ started out with a very promising production, which brought new drilling operations on the structure. After a few more producers were completed during 1936, drilling activity on Flat Coulee slowed down because of the growing difficulties in marketing northern Montana's crude.

Other wildcats, which attracted much attention during the 1930's, were the deep tests drilled by the Montana Dakota Utilities Company on the Baker-Glendive structure, near the Montana-Dakota line. Many Montana petroleum geologists believed that the mother-pool of Montana's crude oil was the Devonian horizon, located considerably below the Sunburst, Cut Bank, Ellis or Madison sands, from which Montana's oil fields were producing at that time. The experience in the Midcontinent, Texas and Canadian oil fields confirmed this theory. As the Devonian horizon had never been tested in Montana, the progress of the Montana Dakota Utilities Company's wildcat, which was planned to test the Devonian formation, was closely observed by Montana oil circles. If oil were found here in commercial quantities, it would mean that no well in the state would be complete without drilling into the Devonian.

When in May, 1936, the well struck oil at a depth of 6,700 feet and showed an initial production of 7,500 barrels of crude per day, the general interest turned quickly into excitement.⁶⁰ Though the well was not drilled into the Devonian horizon, it proved the presence of oil in the deeper horizons of eastern Montana.

As the Montana Dakota Utilities Company controlled all the acreage surrounding its well, no great scramble for leases followed the discovery. Further testing

of the structure followed almost immediately, when the Company started two new wells the following month.⁶¹ Since the first deep test had not been drilled into the Devonian formation, one of these wells was scheduled to go down to a depth of 7,700 feet to make a test of the Devonian.⁶² When this well failed to find oil in the Devonian, August 1936, a third deep test was started, which found oil in the Devonian horizon at a depth of 8,200 feet, about a month later.⁶³ The significance of the discovery made by the Montana Dakota Utilities Company's third deep test was judged as very high in Montana oil circles. This is expressed in the following quotation, taken from an editorial in the Montana Oil and Mining Journal:⁶⁴

The service that Montana Dakota Utilities has rendered the State of Montana will be little appreciated by the present generation, for it has opened up such tremendous possibilities in future Montana oil development that it virtually leaves the state unprospected.

There are fully one hundred fully enclosed oil and gas structures in Montana, which have the Devonian within reach of the drill at a lesser depth than the Baker deep test. What that means to the economic welfare of Montana in years to come, cannot be guessed, let alone appreciated.

⁵⁹ *Montana Oil and Mining Journal*, June 8, 1935. The Hamilton Company well did not discover the presence of oil in the Flat Coulee structure. In 1928 oil had been discovered here by the Sunburst Oil and Refining Company. The well was lost due to mechanical troubles and drilling was not resumed as the Company was swept away by the depression. Its leases were taken over by the J. H. Hamilton Company.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, May 30, 1936.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, June 13, 1936.

⁶² *Ibid.*, August 1, 1936.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, September 26, 1936.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, August 29, 1936.



As in the early phase of Montana's oil industry, expectations ran too high. All Baker-Glendive wells had to be closed down in 1938, because the Montana Dakota Utilites Company was unable to find a market for its crude.⁶⁵

Though the immediate results of the Devonian test on the Baker-Glendive structure were thus disappointing, it proved the presence of crude oil in the Devonian formation in Montana for the first time. This knowledge was mainly responsible for new Devonian tests in Montana during the following decade.

When comparing the developments taking place in Montana's oil industry during the decade of the 1930's with those of the 1920's, a great difference can be noticed. Whereas the decade of the 1920's was a period of considerable expansion, witnessing the discovery and development of Montana's main crude oil fields, the decade of the 1930's was truly a depression decade for many crude oil producers and especially for those in the northern part of the state. Lack of a market for northern Montana crude caused its producers to curtail their production and to cancel their plans for new drillings.

At the same time a parallel can be drawn between the decades of expansion and depression. Whereas the 1920's brought a remarkable expansion in the production sector of Montana's oil industry, the 1930's witnessed a similar expansion in the refining sector of the industry. Enlargement of the refining capacity available to northern Montana crude producers became an urgent problem when the Canadian refiners stopped all their crude purchases in northern Montana in October, 1937. Rapid construction followed and by the end of the 1930's northern Montana crude producers had found a new market in about eleven thousand barrels of daily refining capacity constructed in northern Montana, Idaho and Washington. The additional refining capacity created during the latter part of the 1930's was badly needed

when the nation's defense demanded large amounts of crude oil products a few years later.

[To be continued].

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, December 31, 1938.

en Byerly, Chairman of the Montana Oil and Gas Conservation Commission recently stated that Montana's oil activity is now at an all-time high, with some 20,000,000 acres under lease, 200 geologists and 5 geophysical crews at work searching for new fields, and some half a hundred new wells drilling.

Oilmen believe, Byerly stated, that production could reach 100,000 barrels a day by 1958, 300,000 barrels daily by 1956 and even a million barrels a day by 1968. Present rate of wildcat drilling should result in 70 new Treasure State oil fields by 1970.

"Experience and the law of averages," he said, "say that one of these discoveries should be in the major field class of 100,000,000 barrels ultimate recovery."

"We are producing as much oil now as we can market through existing facilities. We can now produce, without damage to Montana reservoirs, 100,000 barrels of oil daily . . . but our problem is not one of availability, it is one of market . . . the potential is so great that everything that has been done shrinks to insignificance. Only an outlet [pipelines and refineries] of the magnitude of 250,000 barrels daily will help the situation," Mr. Byerly stated.

FLASH

Just as we were going to press, Gov. J. Hugo Aronson announced as "the best news of 1953," proposed construction of a 2000 mil pipeline to major mid-continent oil markets for Williston Basin oil. Since 13 of the 23 new fields discovered in Montana since July 1, 1951 are in Eastern Montana, it is obvious that the pipeline to be surveyed this year will have profound effects on our economy. And it appears equally obvious that some of the most dramatic history of oil in the Treasure State is yet to be written.

RE: "SECOND BONANZA."

As an oil man in Montana and a personal acquaintance of many of the "fathers of the crude oil industry in Montana," I read your article with a great deal of interest. I believe that your omission of my father, E. B. Emrick, geologist who discovered the Pondera, Bannatyne, and many more fields in Montana, is due to lack of knowledge; however, it doesn't seem possible that you could have made a research of the oil industry in Montana without realizing his contribution.

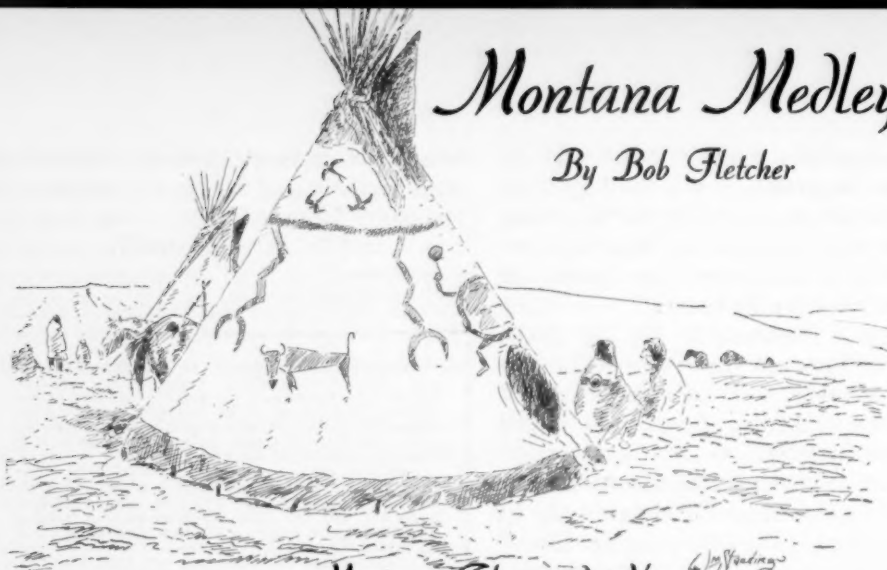
I would appreciate your recognition of E. B. Emrick's part in the early oil geology of Montana in your subsequent articles printed in the Montana Magazine of History.

ROBERT B. EMRICK

(Continued on Page 64)

Montana Medley

By Bob Fletcher



Montana: Then and Now *by Bob Fletcher*

In submitting this installment, Bob Fletcher wrote that the prehistoric material "might stir up some interest in the development and protection of what I think is a valuable natural resource. As to the (contemporary scene) . . . lots of our own people are not familiar with the whole state. And certainly out-of-state people among whom you have many subscribers, have erroneous ideas about Montana."

PREHISTORIC

Building Montana was no six-day job. The story is written on a book whose rock pages are liberally illustrated with prints of animal and plant life accumulated through the ages. From them even a layman can cull interesting information. So much landscape has been squeezed into the big state that a great deal of it is standing on edge. It has been here a long time, during which some major changes have taken place.

A hundred million years ago, nightmarish, reptilian monsters browsed on semi-tropical vegetation that grew in broad marshes, and disported themselves in the waters of a shallow sea that covered the eastern side of the state. Fearful, flesh-eating creatures hunted and haunted the scene and made night hideous with their noises. Mammoth, toothed birds flew overhead or dived for fish. Armored hulks lumbered through the ooze, and long, limber necks surmounted by peanut heads extended from overstuffed bodies. It was no place for a man in his cups.

We are prone to consider the earth's

crust very stable when, in truth, it is about as inert as the grass skirt on a hula dancer. Climates change, too, and forms of vegetation, and water supply. The big, dim-witted dinosaurs couldn't change with them. They left their bones bogged down in mud holes where they were encased in sediment, and their skeleton forms were preserved to adorn museums. As the geological timepiece ticked off more millions of years, hairy mammoths, sabre-toothed tigers, three-toed horses, lemurs, and other strange beasts came and went.

In western Montana there was a long period of extensive mountain building, with intervals of violent vulcanism. Rock layers folded, faulted, and even flowed. Gigantic wrinkles bulged the scenery. The ridges were towering mountains that would dwarf their remnants of today. The troughs were valleys. Things happened on a large scale. Beds of shale and limestone thousands of feet thick, buckled and broke. Rock masses were elevated to the accompaniment of earth shocks and tremors. Wind and water tried to tear them down. The big squeeze

* With apologies to Robert Vaughn, who in 1900 wrote a book "of reminiscences of the first pioneers in the State . . . Indians and Indian Wars . . . the past and present of the Rocky Mountain Country 1864-1900." *Then and Now; or, Thirty-Six Years in the Rockies*, Tribune Printing Company, Minneapolis; 460 pp., illustrated with many good photographs and several rare C. M. Russell paintings.

also made long ripples in the rocks underlying Montana plains; undulations that diminish towards the east. Today they are the hunting grounds of eager oil geologists in the Williston Basin. To add to the confusion, craters belched cinders and volcanic ash while great crevices parted like lips to spew molten lava in successive flows that blanketed the surrounding land. It must have been a spectacular show.

Montana took another geological mauling in comparatively recent years as geologists reckon time. Between thirty to eighty thousand years ago up in northern Canada they were having winter weather that surpassed anything in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Snow and ice piled up in prodigious amounts and, although the story has a Paul Bunyanesque quality, evidence shows that so much sea water was evaporated and then converted into snow that the level of the Pacific Ocean was materially lowered.

The resultant ice-sheet, with a front half a mile to a mile thick, started south. Its inexorable advance had all the effect of a tremendous bulldozer. It planed off elevations and filled depressions. It gathered earth and rock loads that it transported great distances. It dammed rivers to form gigantic lakes and when they escaped the melting ice front contributed to their volume and toothed their fast running waters with sediment and rock debris that intensified their abrasive action. The sheet paused, retreated, and advanced at intervals with lamentable lack of decision. Whenever it receded, it left dimples between the rock and sand cargoes that it dumped to form moraines. The plains of northern Montana are covered with its tracks. Its southernmost advance through Montana stopped along the present course of the Missouri river from Virgelle to Wolf Point.

While all of this was going on out on the prairie, montane glaciers shoved

out of the canyons of what we now call Glacier Park, to meet the continental ice sheet. Other masses of ice plowed down from Canada along troughs west of the main divide. Puny, receding ice caps still remain in Glacier National Park, but the granddaddy of them all sits in shrunken majesty atop the north pole, possibly cogitating another foray.

The whole construction story of The Treasure State is spread out for those who will read it. It has been a colossal project more interesting than any steam shovel operation that ever enthralled a group of sidewalk superintendents. Some of the pages are crumpled and torn, a few have been misplaced, and some are missing. The complete story of the evolution of life is there, too. Perhaps the exceptional opportunity for field work in their own back yards has stimulated Montana's amateur geologists and paleontologists of whom there seem to be more to the acre each year.

Down in southeastern Montana, citizens of Ekalaka, a number of years ago, became interested in prehistoric remains. They went about collecting samples in a serious and thorough manner. This led to plans for a museum in the new high school. One of their prized possessions is a gargantuan bone of some ancient monster. When work commenced on the new building, they found that architectural shortsightedness was going to make it difficult to trundle the petrified femur through the museum door. Being practical people, not to be diverted from their purpose, they wheeled the gigantic specimen into place and built the schoolhouse around it.

When Fort Peck Dam was under construction, 1933 to 1939, a display of fossils in the lobby of the government village movie theater was well worth seeing. If the caretaker was around, he would show his personal prizes and explain them in scientific language that would have you agog. Those fossils ranged from prehistoric figs and pine

cones to the horns of ancient water buffalo, sucked up from bedrock forty feet below surface by the giant dredges that pumped the gravel for this biggest earth fill dam in the world.

An attorney in a civilian department of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, appropriately named Darwin Harbecht, was versed in the art of prospecting for and identifying fossils. He interested employees in his hobby until on Sundays it was not unusual to see a procession of fifty cars faring forth to Hell Creek, south of the Missouri River, where the passengers spent the day digging. They brought home pay dirt, too.

Beautiful fossil specimens of crinoids, the long-stalked marine creatures that look more like plants than animals, and thrived in warm, shallow waters, are found in the limestone on the very crest of the Bridger Range near Bozeman, at an elevation thousands of feet above sea level. In Nixon Gulch near the town of Manhattan, there is a deposit of trilobites, those ancient ancestors of our lobsters and crabs and one of the first critters with enough crust to make a mold from which a replica could be cast.

At Red Lodge, where mining coal was a major industry until natural gas took over, strange and mysterious relics have been found. The late Dr. Siegfriedt, mayor of the town for a number of years, was interested in geology, as is most everyone around a mining camp. He was also a publicity zealot, keen to put Red Lodge in the national limelight. Familiarity with medical terms made it easy for him to use the language of paleontologists with charming and convincing fluency. One day he announced that he had acquired what seemed to be a human molar embedded in a piece of coal taken from a Red Lodge mine. He took up the cudgels against skeptical archaeologists. He was so vociferous and insistent that wise men from the east came out to see. The heated arguments that followed focused on Red Lodge the na-

tional attention that the Doctor desired. Whenever things showed signs of simmering down he added fuel to the flames. As a result, expeditions now arrive every summer from eastern universities and nationally known museums to prospect in that vicinity.

In the upper Ruby River region of southwestern Montana, Henry Ziedema, writer and geologist, discovered in the summer of 1948, a formation of fine-grained sandstone that cleaves in almost paper thin sheets. With infinite care and diligence he succeeded in collecting excellent impressions of prehistoric flies, mosquitoes, grasshoppers, and other insects. There is a wonderful fossil bed south of Harlowton and another along the breaks of the Milk River, both east and west of Havre.

One of the prize exhibits of the American Museum of Natural History in New York is the skeleton of a former Montana resident, *Tyrannosaurus Rex*, King of the Reptiles. Divested of all flesh he looks a trifle peaked. In his prime he was as massive and terrifying a creature as ever haunted prehistoric bog and fen.

* * *

PRESENT

Today, when potential visitors look at a map of Montana they suspect that the state is big, and when they travel it they are convinced. Natives have been known to send friends back east, urgent appeals reading, "hurry out and help us look at the scenery,—there is more than we can handle." It is always "back" east because that is where most Montanans or their forebears originated. "East" starts with Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri.

You can't know Montana by watching it stream past automobile and Pullman windows or by knowing of its prehistoric past. You have to wander over it leisurely, taking time to do some traveling by hand or saddle horse, testing a trout stream here and there, sometimes just sitting and looking. Then it gets into your system and stays.

There is an eleven-thousand-foot vertical spread between Montana's high and low points, with the latter starting at around 1,850 feet above sea level. It is as far across the State by the looping Yellowstone Trail (U. S. 10) as it is from Chicago to Philadelphia. Because of this bigness in all directions, up and down as well as sideways, there is no monotony about the climate, landscape, and people. They come in robust variety, and perhaps Montana's topographic contrasts are responsible for the diversity of occupations, fortunes, and opinions, and even for the idiom of her distinctive citizenry.

In the eastern part of the state, shallow and comparatively narrow valleys stretch along the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. These elongated troughs and the bottom land of their tributaries are fenced and irrigated. They are what the motorist sees when he follows the water grade of main highways. Between them the airplane passenger sees breaks and badlands and thousands of square miles of rolling benchland creased with coulees and gouged by the stark channels of many dry creeks. Scrub conifers freckle wide areas, water holes are scarce, and it takes a lot of acres to graze a cow critter.

This part of Montana has cherished the traditions and customs of cow country from the days when longhorn trail herds plodded north from Texas and alkali dust hung heavy in the wake of the drag. When June rains come, the green of wild grass is splashed with flower colors; the fragile blooms of the prickly pear soften the severity of their spiny thorns; even the gnarled sagebrush is fresher and more pungent. In the heat of summer the native grass cures on the stem and turns brown. White alkali patches mark dried water holes. Then the sage-tufted landscape, stretching away in drab monotony, looks bleak and forbidding to unaccustomed eyes. This used to be called open range. Soil ex-

perts now refer to a lot of it as marginal land.

There is a lonely grandeur about Montana's prairie that makes it akin to the more highly colored lands of the Southwest. It fools the city-bred pilgrim. What he mistakes for a drear, dead waste, wrapped in silence, is really a country full of life and small noises. During the summer, down in the bottom of spring-fed coulees, Hereford cattle lie close to the cool seepage and chew their cud while caressing their bald-faced progeny with mother cow glances. The dusty streets of prairie dog towns resound to the gossip of its fat burghers, who sit with hands drooped on paunch at the mounded portals of their homes. Molest them and underground they go,—a staccato burst of chatter dragging a twitching tail after it.

Sagehens and prairie chickens scuttle through the vegetation, quietly merging their protective coloring with the undergrowth. Lean jackrabbits silently bounce across country. Antelope, with insatiable curiosity, stare at you until panic seizes them and they skim like wraiths in a wide circle, to halt and stare again. A band of range horses will spot you from afar. Get too close and off they go at a wild gallop and out of sight over the first rise. In a few seconds they will appear silhouetted abreast on the crest of another convenient ridge. They will pause briefly, and with a defiant toss of head and streaming mane, will disappear. Larks spring out from underfoot, hawks soar overhead, magpies looking like airplane models cock a critical eye your way. The range country is not as deserted as you might believe.

The huge eastern area merges with similar but higher ground that blankets the central portion of the state from the Wyoming line to the Canadian border. It is studded with isolated mountain ranges and flat-topped buttes. The soft sandstone and shales have weathered to form characteristic rimrock escarpments that add to the confusion of surface con-

tours. This region, too, was once a broad, unfenced domain of pioneer cattle and sheep outfits.

The Milk, Missouri, Musselshell, and Yellowstone Rivers cut it into big blocks further subdivided by their tributaries, and each segment has its own lineaments and characteristics. Where soil is favorable, the high plains are marked by grain fields, but vast areas have never known a plow. The lone mountain ranges are as picturesque as their names . . . the Crazy Mountains, the Bear's Paw, Moccasin, Big and Little Snowies, Judith, Little Rockies, Highwoods, Little Belts, and the Sweetgrass Hills. The valleys of the major rivers provide sanctuary for towns and home ranches and right-of-way for transcontinental railways and paved highways.

The western end of the state is a welter of interlocking mountain ranges, including the continental divide, mantled with ermine in winter and skirted with forest green the year round. In their fissures and in the crannies and crevices of stream beds, nature prodigally banked the bullion that still lures prospectors. They encircle valleys, or "holes," as the mountain men of the fur days called them, and into these spacious basins, gulches pour clear, cold streams that unite and form rivers. Back in the tall-timbered labyrinths of the high places, hundreds of cirques and troughs cut by montane glaciers, hold lakes of exquisite beauty.

A thousand and one little things combine to give Montana its collective charm and color. Things like beargrass and bluejoint, meadow larks and curlews, coyotes and camp-robbers, trout streams and canyons, the purple haze on far horizons. There are smells, sounds, colors, tastes, and shapes, any one of which would mean home to a nostalgic Montanan riding foreign ranges. Snowy mountain crests glistening in the sunlight gave her the name "Land of the Shining Mountains" and her natural re-

sources truly justify her nickname, "The Treasure State."

But Montana's people are her greatest asset. They are the kind you find in fresh, new countries. They come from all parts of the nation and from many foreign lands. Independence, friendliness, and hospitality are qualities they hold in common. If they and their state have been ruthlessly exploited (as some pessimists and politicians would have them believe) very few seem aware of it. Montanans just go on being a happy, self-reliant, prosperous people: sodbusters on the Highline; wheat farmers on the benches; lumberjacks up the Bitterroot and out on the Kootenai; hardrock miners over the hill; cowhands down on the Tongue and Powder; woolgrowers over the Big Dry. Doctors, lawyers, merchants in town, and chiefs on the reservations.

Because there is a square mile or more of land for every three Montanans, and fewer residents in the entire state than there are in Seattle, everybody has plenty of elbow room and enjoys it. It's quite a place—this Treasure State!

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ROBERT G. ATHEARN
Department of History
University of Colorado

MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

BOOK REVIEWS

GUIDE TO LIFE AND LITERATURE
OF THE SOUTHWEST, by *Frank
Dobie*. Dallas. Southern Methodist
Press, 1952. 222 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by Anne McDonnell

This revised and enlarged edition of the first publication of 1942 (neither edition was copyrighted) is compiled by the foremost authority on the literature of the southwest and the west. It should be in every high school and college library in Montana, since Mr. Dobie has included many Montana authors as well as books on Montana in his check-list. To him, the Treasure State is more a part of the Southwest than California, particularly in the subject of ranching, where "the Southwest might be said to run up into Montana."

It is primarily a selection of useful writings, with brief critical comments on each book listed, rather than a complete bibliography of the region.

Mr. Dobie is a native son of Texas, whose knowledge of the West, its people and historic tradition is combined with a rare appreciation of good writing. He is a master of Western regional history-literature. His criticisms of the books listed is both intelligent and honest, for he does not "damn with faint praise." Rather, Mr. Dobie disposes of a pretentious but worthless book with a few well-chosen words.

The preface and introductory chapters explain Mr. Dobie's interpretation and evaluation of what is best in the growing literature of the West. The arrangement by chapters of subjects, such as "range life, mountain men," and similar topics adds to the usefulness of the book for the student. This book is an invaluable tool for all persons interested in Western Americana.

WINTER, 1954



THE JOURNALS OF LEWIS AND
CLARK, edited by *Bernard De Voto*.
1953. Houghton Mifflin Co., 844 pp.,
\$6.50.

Reviewed by Clarence Gorchels
State College of Washington

The remarkable journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition are familiar to all historians, but this new De Voto edition can be expected to considerably increase appreciation of these reports among general readers.

For scholars, De Voto's edition will not replace the seven-volume set of *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* as edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites (Dodd, Mead and Co.) 50 years ago. This is not to say that no new material has come to light since Thwaites' monumental work. On the contrary, other reports, such as Milo M. Quaife's edition of *The Journals of Captain Meriwether Lewis and Sergeant John Ordway* (Wisconsin Historical Society) have been worthy publications. (In January of this year Lucile Kane of the Minnesota Historical Society experienced the thrill of discovering some unknown original Clark manuscripts in an antiquated desk in a home in St. Paul. [Montana Magazine of History, Spring 1953, p. 57].

The De Voto edition can justifiably be described as a more "popular" work. Yet, it would not be correct to say that De Voto has sacrificed scholarship. He has preserved the true literary flavor of the reports by retaining almost all of the original spelling, grammatical construction, irregular capitalization, and colorful vocabulary used by the distinguished explorers. At the same time he has made

the reports more readable than the other footnote-burdened editions in existence. The technical printing job also helps make the material readable. The intelligent use of "white space," paragraphing, italics, and captions is worth mentioning.

De Voto has used excellent judgment in uniting details selected from the reports of Lewis, Clark, Ordway, and others. The background notes and short informational paragraphs which De Voto has contributed are concise and stimulating, and they are valuable in summarizing and in aiding continuity. Moreover, these notes are occasionally used to good advantage as a narrative device, such as: "The true terrorists, however, the Teton Sioux, were still to come." Nevertheless, De Voto's editing does not seem to be obtrusive. In brief, the publication of this new edition of the *Journals* is an event which should be greeted with "a shout to be raised for joy" and a salute "by three rounds from our blunderbuts and the small arms of the party."

* * *



THE CUSTER MYTH, by Colonel W. A. Graham. The Stackpole Company, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1953. 433 pp; illustrated. \$10.00.

Reviewed by Edgar I. Stewart

As the title indicates, this is a source book of materials dealing with the battle of the Little Big Horn River in which Lieutenant-Colonel George Armstrong Custer and five troops or companies of the Seventh United States Cavalry met annihilation at the hands of a much larger force of Sioux and Cheyenne Indians.

Since that day, controversy has raged as to the responsibility for the tragedy. Colonel Graham's book does little to resolve that controversy. He mentions that a great deal of obscurity surrounding the battle is due to the fact that Mrs. Custer was determined to uphold her husband's memory and refused to allow any criticism of his conduct to go unanswered. That is certainly true, but Colonel Graham might also have mentioned that the activities of certain anti-Custer officers, who were determined to "defend the regiment" at all costs, are equally responsible for that same obscurity.

The selections included cover a wide range. Much of it is material already familiar, such as the Godfrey article and the selections from the *Arikara Narrative*. But many of the selections cover materials not so easily obtainable even by the serious Custer student, such as the selections from the Golden-Bentzen correspondence, and it is these that give the volume its chief value. One serious shortcoming is the failure to provide a critical evaluation of the materials which are presented. The compiler adds some comments of his own but these by no means constitute evaluation that even the casual student has a right to expect. There is almost no specific and objective analysis of the credibility of the various writers who are represented, and they are certainly by no means of equal credibility.

One problem which always faces the compiler of such a volume is that of what to include and what to leave out; and probably no two persons would solve the problem in precisely the same way. That Colonel Graham's selection of materials does not agree with what someone else would have selected is certainly no valid criticism of the book. But this reviewer cannot help but regret that Lieutenant Bradley's graphic description of the meeting of his detachment with the Crow scouts who had been with Custer was not included. If anything

written about the Custer fight approaches pure literature, that is it. This reviewer would also have included the article by Mr. W. J. Ghent, "Varnum, Reno, and the Little Big Horn," which appeared in *Winners of the West*, April 30, 1936. Colonel Graham does not think highly of Mr. Ghent, but inclusion of this article would have enabled the reader to form his own opinion of Mr. Ghent's capabilities as an historian. It might have been wise, too, to have included selections—adequately edited—from the transcript of the Reno Court of Inquiry. These should have included the testimony of John Frett, one of the civilian packers with the expedition, including the cross-examination by Mr. Gilbert, who was Reno's counsel. Frett testified under oath that Major Reno was very much under the influence of liquor on the night of June 25, 1876, and a searching and even brutal cross-examination failed to shake his story. In fact Frett handed out much more than he received and had decidedly the better of the argument. But by reading the transcript the reader could judge for himself whether Frett was telling the truth, and whether Reno was, or was not, drunk on the night in question.

The bibliography, which is by Mr. Fred Dustin, is adequate, although just what purpose is served by indicating which books the author has in his library, is not readily apparent. By the "author" does he mean Colonel Graham or Mr. Dustin? There are students of the battle who will undoubtedly disagree with the evaluation of some of the books listed by Mr. Dustin, but the latter is certainly entitled to his opinion. The volume is abundantly illustrated. The illustrations, in fact, are one of the best features of the book. There is an index, and the publishers have provided an attractive format. All in all, in spite of a few shortcomings, this book presents a very valuable collection of Custeriana.

WINTER, 1954

THE SACRED PIPE. Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux. *Recorded and Edited by Joseph Epes Brown.* University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma. 1953. pp. 1-44. Index. \$3.00.

Reviewed by Carling Malouf, Montana State University.

Black Elk, an aged Oglala Dakota, was charged with an important religious mission to his people. Through visions, beginning at age nine, he became one of the wise men of the tribe, and had been given special powers to use for the benefit of the Oglala. He had fasted, prayed, and suffered much in an effort to fulfill his mission, yet he could see that very few responded to his efforts. He feared that the information might die with him, and thereby the Oglala would become extinct as a people. Mr. Joseph Epes Brown, who was searching for "the lofty wisdom possessed by" some of the old priests among the American Indians, just happened to appear on the scene and the message of Black Elk was recorded for posterity. Mr. Brown, thus, regards himself as the editor of the account, remarking, (preface, p. x) "Black Elk is no longer living, but this is his book . . ."

A brief preface by the editor provides background material for the sections which follow. Here he gives a resume of Oglala religion, and a history of the sacred pipe which was regarded by Black Elk as important in their ceremonialism. The preface is followed by a short foreword by Black Elk where additional background data is offered the reader.

The body of the book is divided into eight chapters, seven of which describe the seven sacred rites in which the pipe is used. Chapter I, "*The Gift of the Sacred Pipe*," describes a legend accounting for the origin of the pipe, and its appearance among the Oglala.

Chapters II to VIII are devoted to the specific rituals in which the pipe is used. These are: "*The Keeping of the Soul*;" "*The Releasing of the Soul*;" "*The Rite*

of *Purification*," which is a variation of an ordinary sweat bath; "*Crying For a Vision*," or seeking spiritual power and a guardian spiritual power and a guardian spirit; "*The Sun Dance*," "*The Making of Relatives*," "*Preparing for Womanhood*," which is a puberty ceremony; and finally, "*The Throwing of the Ball*."

While it is a well written and well organized book, the editor lacks a suitable background, or foundation in ethnology, which would have made him eminently better prepared to interpret the information he obtained. He would have been able to avoid making several unfortunate misinterpretations of the information provided by Black Elk. In several instances he introduced stereotyped ideas regarding American Indian religion.

He arbitrarily decided that *wakan*, the Siouan word for supernatural power, or *mana*, should be interpreted as "sacred." Thus, the sacred pipe's contents were said to be "very" *wakan*, when Black Elk really meant that it had "much" *wakan*, or much power. Had the editor been trained to Siouan linguistics he would not have blundered into this error.

Most of the footnotes in the book add to its value. However, there are some quotations from publications on Indians living to the south of the Dakota, such as the Pawnee, and Osage. He might have found more suitable comparative material had he sought references on their linguistical kin, the Assiniboine, Winnebago, and other such tribes. In several footnotes he shows parallels between Oglala concepts and those of Islam, Hindus, and even with Christianity. Such comparisons in this particular book serve no useful purpose except, perhaps, to show that the editor has read a few books.

The Sacred Pipe is a book that may remain valuable for decades as a source of primary data on Dakota religion and ritual. Moreover, it is interesting reading for those who like to study the exotic.

The rich description of the seven pipe

ceremonies should be of interest to Montanans. Pipe ritual among the Dakota is very elaborate, and is accompanied by a rich body of lore. It is much richer than it is among tribes, say, in western Montana. Pipes and their associated ritual moved westward into the State in very recent times. As they moved, or "diffused" to the west, many of the ritual's elements were lost. *The Sacred Pipe* is a book which gives an excellent description of the pipe "complex" (to use an anthropological term) in an elaborate eastern form.

* * *

INDIAN COUNTRY, by Dorothy M. Johnson, 197 pp., Ballantine Books, Inc., 1953, \$0.35 or \$2.00.

Reviewed by John T. Vance III

Indian Country, like a good story about any country, is a story of people.

The eleven short articles in *Indian Country* appeared previously in such mass-appeal magazines as *Colliers*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Argosy*, the last named being a hairy-chested publication aimed at the sedentary male who likes to dream. The fact that Miss Johnson's stories have appeared in these publications should set the tone for the book. But it doesn't.

Dorothy Johnson's West doesn't come billowing up at you out of the dust raised by the thundering hooves of a sheriff's posse. Nor does it stare starkly at you from the barrel of a Colt's revolver—trigger-filled, of course. Her West is real! She depicts the people of great heart and noble spirit who inhabited Montana toward the end of the buffalo herds. Her stories of warriors and squaws, white men and women, boys and girls are written in some of the best prose it has ever been this reviewer's pleasure to read. Miss Johnson's writing is as lean and spare as the people in her stories. At least one reader is convinced that she must have been there.

There is no place for the craven here. Man's humor does not leave him. Even the wealthy tenderfoot from Boston in

A Man Called Horse, captured by the Crows and slave to a vicious old squaw who was known to decapitate her pet dog, thinks of what he'll say to his grandmother when he gets back to Boston, "Grandmother, let me fetch your shawl. I've been accustomed to doing little errands for another lady about your age."

Our battered Stetson is doffed to the publisher, too. Ballantine has risked much in bringing out new books of high quality in two simultaneous editions: paperbound and hardbound. As Joseph Henry Jackson says . . . "this scheme, or some other related to it, is going to revolutionize the book trade. And 'revolutionize' is not too strong a word in my opinion." This destroys the long-standing price barrier which kept many Americans in arrears on current enjoyment of the latest books—a truly commendable step forward!

This is a book that all students of western history must read. Granted, Miss Johnson does not write like a man. She merely writes like every man—or woman—would like to write. And if this reviewer has not counted coup many times, his medicine is at least a bit better for having read *Indian Country*.

Enormous Prices Charged for Fruit in Pioneer Days

Col. R. F. May, of this city [Bozeman] ran a fruit stand in Helena away back in 1868.

"Five cents nor twenty-five cents would not go far towards buying fruit in those days," said the Colonel the other day. "One gentleman, who was courting a young lady, used to come to my place and buy four apples for five dollars, a dollar and a quarter apiece and then present them to his sweetheart. I always picked out four of the best apples I had, wrapped them up in tissue paper and place them in a neat candy box for him. By and by they were married, after which I never sold him any more apples. The first year's pineapples sold for seven

dollars apiece and there are still living in Helena, men who paid me that price for them. Oranges were \$2.50 to \$3.00 each and the Montana Pioneers who are rich today did not buy them.

"The first shipment of sweet potatoes ever received in Montana was shipped to me, and they cost me \$1.35 a pound. The first man who came along on the street was a Chinaman. I was opening them on the sidewalk. He bought two pounds at \$1.50 a pound. Bookkeepers were paid \$12 a day. For a little stand on the street, in front of a store, I paid \$30 a month rent in advance. A very ordinary wooden building across the street, used as a saloon, rented for \$400 a month.

"The New York Sun, then a very small paper, and all other newspapers sold for 50 cents each. Magazines cost \$1.25 each. The Helena Herald was \$52 a year, which price I paid for it for five years. They came around and collected a dollar every Monday morning and the paper was a very modest sheet. Notwithstanding the enormous price of \$52 a year, the expenses of running the paper were fully as great, and the proprietors made no money out of it till years afterwards.

"One day I had an unusual stock of fruit, which I feared would spoil on my hands, and so I went up to the Herald office and got a hundred circulars printed. They were very small circulars, but cost ten cents apiece. I did not hire boys to distribute them, but took them around myself.

"Much of the fruit I sold came 1,600 miles by stages and this fact had a great deal to do with the prices. As transportation facilities increased prices gradually reduced, and it has been going on ever since. The prices I have quoted are no higher than the average prices in those days; everything was the same way."

The Avant Courier

Bozeman, Saturday, Jan. 28, 1893



DIRECTOR'S ROUNDUP

K. ROSS TOOLE

Not all of the troubles in making a museum are technical. There are some which are a consequence of the human element. A lot of people, in effect, want to get into the act.

Certain groups feel slighted because they haven't been allotted sufficient space in the building; others feel that we are slighting some particular (and favorite) aspect of the state's history. Still others think we are picking the wrong artists to do our background painting. Some howl like banshees when we fire (as we once had occasion to do) a favorite exhibits designer. One group is incensed because we don't propose to hang some 290 pioneer portraits but rather intend to exhibit these portraits only occasionally because of a critical shortage of exhibit space.

We have been offered a twelve-ton boiler, bath tubs, trucks, a railroad car, a mummy, assorted cow bones, bed pans, assorted furniture, unexploded bombs, a mechanical milking machine, logs, springs, hooks, bolts, pins, dies, monsters and empty bottles. And almost every time we turn something down we get somebody mad.

We have been accused of misusing state funds, treating our employees "callously," creating an "empire," lowering public taste, and abusing pioneers. One religious fanatic wrote us that our museum was "corrupting the morals of our youth. Yea, verily." A very positive correspondent told us to "go jump in Prickley Pear creek."

There is always the letter from the "taxpayer" who says that if we don't

shape up and make the museum *his* way, he'll get us all fired.

Then there are "pressure" letters to the Board of Examiners, visits from irate Sons and Daughters, critics from art groups, etc.

I'd like to say we take all this with equanimity. We don't. We write hot answers to hot letters and usually match insult with insult. It's bad policy but a wonderful cathartic.

We've got a cohesive museum plan put together by the best museum men in the United States. We've got the best advice of the state's best historians. We're raising our own money to finance our own plan. We aren't bureaucrats and we're not afraid of "taxpayers." We're non-political and aim to stay that way—and we're sticking to our museum plan and the standard it sets regardless of pressures.

We have a loyal, hard working, talented, trained group of employees. It is true that we have made and will continue to make mistakes. But a good museum will emerge here (if we don't all get assassinated) because, strange as it seems, we are beginning to know more about museums than anybody for miles around.

We value the cooperation of those organizations which are dedicated to the promotion of Montana's heritage. We'd like the assistance of the Sons and Daughters of the Montana Pioneers, the Montana Institute of the Arts and others. But if we don't get it, we expect to go it alone.

(Continued on Page 64)

MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

Letters to the Editors



"The History of Oil in Montana" . . . is extremely interesting and revealing. Congratulations on this able and timely coverage of an industry that is becoming so important. . . Congratulations, too, on your very fine magazine."

KEN BYERLY, Chairman
Montana Oil and Gas
Conservation Commission

"Your new three-year subscription is the best bargain I ever got."

DABNEY OTIS COLLINS
Denver, Colorado

"I have enjoyed your most interesting magazine since issue No. 1."

MARK H. BROWN
Bellevue, Nebraska

"We have admired the Mackay (Russell) collection many times and are delighted that it has finally come to a proper home. We are favorably impressed by all of the work you are doing. Congratulations."

JOSEPH H. SAMPLE
Chicago, Ill.

"I am delighted . . . with the Montana Magazine of History, which I find exciting, interesting and extremely useful in my work."

CHARLOTTE YARBOROUGH
(New York editor and
author)

"My sincerest congratulations on the finest history magazine in the country. It seems impossible, yet each issue betters the preceding one."

LAWRENCE FROST, Curator
Monroe (Mich.) Historical
Museum

"The magazine is a beauty and will, I hope, eventually contain some articles about Montana printers."

ROLLO G. SILVER
Simmons College, Boston

According to Prof. Rufus A. Coleman, MSU, Mr. Silver refers to the MSU survey of "Nineteenth Century Montana Book Publishers," research for which was sponsored by the American Bibliographical Society, now awaiting publication. Mr. Silver is a leading American bibliographer and specialist in American literature. This magazine will be happy to report later on early-day Treasure State publishers.

"When our family visited the new State Museum in late August, I just had to write to you about the splendid job being done. Ever since coming to Montana, 21 years ago, I've wanted to see just this sort of thing accomplished. My two children are native Montanans; and this wonderful museum is exactly what they need to crystalize their thinking about the history, economics and culture of their home state. No native Montanan could have felt more pride than I did, as I pictured the impact of the museum displays on the casual tourist from other regions. The architecture is both functional and pleasing to the eye—the exhibits thus far completed are priceless in their educational value."

RUTH R. TEEL
Missoula, Mont.

"I am anxious not to miss a single copy of the magazine as I am having them bound in permanent form. I have all copies since you started publication."

DR. W. E. NEWMAN
Greenacres, Wash.

RE: "Second Bonanza"

(Continued from Page 51)

Our regrets. Although manifestly impossible in a survey, such as this brief oil history by Don Douma, to do more than skim the surface, we admit that E. Byers Emrick was a man of vital significance. As such, his name is imperative in Montana's oil development, and it should not be omitted from even the most brief survey. *The Montana Oil Journal* of August 28, 1943, states the case well when it reports:

"With the finding of commercial oil production on Pendroy structure, E. Byers Emrick of Conrad is credited with four Montana oil fields, with an 'assist' on a fifth and with one gas field. This is the fruit of 21 years of study and work in the Sweetgrass Arch of Northern Montana."

The article then relates how Mr. Emrick came to Montana in 1919 and three years later discovered the Pondera structure. When his employer, Carter Oil Co., declined to drill there he resigned and was instrumental in bringing in Pondera as a field. Next he brought about the development of Bannatyne field. Then



The original of this 20"x30" oil, **MORNING ON THE NORTH FORK**, depicting elk in a Montana winter wilderness setting, was seen by thousands of visitors to the Historical museum's North Gallery, last month. It, along with 33 other fine oils and several clay wildlife models in this show, was the work of a promising young Montana artist, Leslie H. Peters of Great Falls. Mr. Peters, who studied at the Art Students League and the Central Park School of Art at New York, is the newest member of the State Historical Museum staff. He has painted backgrounds for the buffalo jump and Virginia City dioramas, and is currently engaged in a dramatic winter setting for the buffalo wildlife habitat group and in planning the proposed Lewis and Clark expedition diorama.

he turned his efforts to Midway. Years before the Cut Bank field came in, Mr. Emrick recommended it for drilling. He also mapped the structure known as Bow & Arrow, on the West flank of the Sweetgrass Hills, which proved to be a gas field. He was one of the first to recognize the faulting of the Pendroy district, which when seismograph-mapped resulted in discovery of oil on the old Coffee-Wallenstein ranch. A real record for a real oil pioneer!

DIRECTOR'S ROUNDUP

(Continued from Page 62)

Montana is nearly a generation behind in the exploitation of perhaps its richest natural resource, its heritage. There isn't time for kid gloves and diplomacy. There isn't time to humor the ancestor worship cult or "the taxpayer will get you if you don't watch out" cult. In three years the Historical Society has made a lot of progress. It hasn't made it without injuring some sensibilities and making some enemies. We've been unorthodox in many ways but at least we've done something.

We think the vast majority of Montanans are with us. When we think they aren't, we're not wedded to this job—we'll go jump in Prickley Pear creek.

COVER The world's greatest cowboy artist, Charles Marion Russell, produced more than a score of these Frontier Types in pen and ink sketches; this one, *The Trapper*, is one of five from the Malcolm S. Mackay collection now owned by the Montana Historical Society. Three others will appear as cover illustrations during 1954. None of these have ever previously been reproduced. If copyright problems can be cleared, we hope to offer reprints of this and the other forthcoming cover subjects, for the first time. Watch for the announcement.



